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# A Feasibility Study Concerning the Creation of a European Observatory of Cultural Co-operation

## A Final Report to the European Commission

18th August 2003

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A Final Report to the European Commission

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

ECOTEC was asked to conduct a feasibility study concerning the possible creation of a “European observatory having as its exclusive purpose the analysis of cultural co-operation in Europe”. The terms of reference for the study define the objectives of the European Union in this field as the “observation, follow-up, analysis and description of different forms of cultural co-operation in Europe” and state that these objectives could potentially be achieved through a European Observatory of Cultural Co-operation.

The methodology of the study was built on a first phase, designed to map the existing situation in Europe in terms of organisations that currently carry out all or some of the roles of an “observatory of cultural co-operation”. This phase of the study took as its starting point a definition of the roles of an “observatory of cultural co-operation” based on 12 characteristic objectives which, among others, included: analysis and promotion of cultural co-operation, exchange of information and compiling inventories of bodies active in the cultural field. This exercise enabled the identification of organisations throughout Europe, which confirmed through their responses that they perform four or more of the activities characteristic of an observatory of cultural co-operation.

Following this mapping exercise, a survey of stakeholders in the cultural field was conducted to investigate the points of view and expectations of professionals in the cultural field (representatives of museums, theatres, festivals, libraries, publishing houses, etc) and policy makers in European States (Ministries, regions, local administrations) in relation to their needs and aspirations for greater support for cultural co-operation at a European level. The survey was followed by a series of in-depth interviews with representatives of cultural institutions and/or cultural networks and a workshop, where stakeholders with divergent viewpoints debated the advantages and disadvantages of the different options for the future, defined in the study terms of reference: a) taking no action; b) creating an observatory from scratch and; c) networking of existing organisations.

### **Key Findings**

The report initially provides an overview of the range of bodies currently offering some degree of support, information and analysis in the field of cultural co-operation in Europe today, before analysing the findings of the first survey of such organisations. The field is highly complex and the range of organisations operating at different geographical level is difficult to classify and define in an entirely satisfactory way. Organisations that fulfil at least some of the roles defined for a potential observatory of cultural co-operation can be classified into five broad groups, on the basis of the function and structure of the organisations: a) Government Departments, Agencies and Cultural Institutes; b) Other national and regional institutions involved in promoting cultural co-operation; c) Umbrella cultural networks; d) Thematic cultural networks; and e) Organisations focused on cultural research and documentation.

The initial survey of existing organisations identified 65 organisations (in nearly all the countries covered by the study), performing at least some of the functions that could be fulfilled by a potential observatory of cultural co-operation. These organisations, a majority of which receive at least some public funding, include individual institutions with an international focus to their work, national associations of institutions and European networks, although few are pan-European in their coverage. Many organisations identified are multi-disciplinary in their focus, while the most common activities conducted relate to promoting exchange and providing information on policy, legislation and regulations in the field of cultural co-operation. The survey demonstrates the high level of existing expertise and the numerous sources of information that currently exist in the field of cultural cooperation.

It is clear that cultural co-operation has developed in Europe on a 'bottom up' basis. This has some benefits, in that current networks and observatories are 'owned' and valued, but also means that the field is relatively fragmented. The consultation process identified a number of key gaps and barriers, which prevent cultural co-operation and mobility operating as it might in Europe. These included the sustainability and inclusiveness of current networks, issues relating to information and knowledge management, and the lack of a coherent voice on European policy issues. Although there were different views expressed within the study, this could not be clearly explained by looking at particular geographic locations or cultural sectors

Those consulted through the study were asked to identify key priorities for greater support at the European level. Increased funding was the priority cited by the most respondents. However, improved knowledge management in the sector also emerged as a key priority. While information and knowledge *per se* are not lacking in the field of cultural cooperation, the management and dissemination of this information is not well co-ordinated at present. More specifically, there was a clear emphasis in the research findings on the need for practical information in relation to potential partners and funding. The collation and analysis of comparative statistics relating to cultural co-operation also emerged as an important factor and a prerequisite for improved understanding of the nature and impact of cultural co-operation activities.

Regarding the three options set out in the Terms of Reference, the study concludes the following:

1. *Taking no action*: It is clear from our research that the current situation is unsustainable without increased intervention, mainly because the sector requires investment simply to maintain the present situation and respond to a constantly changing European context.
2. *Setting up a new European cultural co-operation observatory*: There appears to be a considerable level of resistance among cultural stakeholders to the idea of establishing a new observatory. The most frequently expressed concerns relate to the danger of over-centralisation, the potential for generating unnecessary bureaucracy and the risk that work carried out by existing organisations will simply be duplicated. In the context of a lack of resources in the sector as whole, commitment to such an institution is likely to be limited from a significant proportion of actors in the sector.

3. *Supporting increased networking between organisations which currently fulfil at least some of the roles of an observatory:* This option received broader support amongst those consulted for the feasibility study. Greater networking was frequently viewed as a way to maximise use of the expertise of existing cultural actors, sustain the current 'bottom-up' system, and avoid duplication. Effective knowledge management and dissemination would be of key importance if this option were to be chosen.

## **Recommendations**

It is apparent from our research that there is frustration within the cultural sector regarding the lack of European financial support for cultural co-operation and there are concerns that any new interventions at the European level will take resources away from existing organisations and networks. This leads to conservatism within the sector in relation to change. Moreover, the field is highly complex and already 'network-rich'. Despite this, there are high levels of demand for improved knowledge management, although the demand for knowledge varies by type of actor.

In light of the study findings relating to the lack of popular support and the likely costs and complexity associated with developing a new European Observatory for Cultural Co-operation, we would not recommend establishing such an observatory. The current scarcity of resources available for networking and cultural co-operation would make an observatory an unpopular use of resources and would be seen as a 'top down' intervention.

However, the Feasibility Study recommends three types of interventions to address the needs identified:

1. Continued support for at least some existing networks and organisations active in the field of cultural co-operation and a detailed review of funding to these networks. This is clearly a priority for the sector and it would be wise to capitalise on the wealth of expertise and co-operation which has developed through bottom up mechanisms in the past, rather than attempt to set up new institutions and mechanisms, which would not necessarily be popular or effective.
2. The establishment of an effective coordination mechanism for information exchange and dissemination within the field. The study argues that a web-based cultural co-operation portal could provide a central reference point for cultural co-operation. The site could include background information, cover current events, hold regulatory and contact information, and offer a series of interactive features designed to build an active user community. The report reviews services offered in existing cultural portals and assesses the relative advantages of developing the existing European Cultural Portal hosted on the Europa server and setting up a new portal without Commission branding and hosted externally. It is argued that regardless of the technical design, the added value of the portal would lie in its active and interactive nature.

In terms of the costs involved in the two options, based on a number of working assumptions made, it becomes apparent that there will be a relatively small difference in costs between the two options. Hence, the advantages and disadvantages rest more with the likely usability and popularity of the two alternatives. The study purports that the advantages of setting up a new European cultural portal relate mainly to the visibility and accessibility of the service and the sense of ‘ownership’ of the service. The study suggests that the small extra cost associated with the development of a new external cultural co-operation portal is justified due the likely increase in usability the flexibility and interactivity of the site.

3. Additional impetus in the area of cultural statistics development and collection. The findings of the feasibility study confirm the need for a reinforcement of existing efforts in the area of cultural statistics, to enable an improved understanding of the cultural sector in general and cultural co-operation in particular. However, it is recognised that increasing the availability of comparable data and statistics will be costly in terms of time and resources. Future efforts in this area should build on work carried out to date by Eurostat and include a specific focus on developing ways to measure cultural co-operation activity and assess its impact.



## **SOMMAIRE**

La société ECOTEC a été engagée pour entreprendre une étude de faisabilité concernant la création potentielle d'un "Observatoire européen dont le but exclusif serait l'analyse de la coopération culturelle en Europe". Le cahier des charges de l'étude définit les objectifs de l'Union européenne dans ce domaine comme étant «observation, suivi, analyse et description des différentes formes de coopération culturelle en Europe» et établit que ces objectifs pourraient être potentiellement atteints grâce à un Observatoire européen de la coopération culturelle.

Dans la première phase, l'étude dresse le bilan de la situation actuelle en Europe en termes d'organisations remplissant actuellement plusieurs, sinon tous les rôles d'un « observatoire de la coopération culturelle ». Le point de départ de cette phase est la définition des rôles d'un « observatoire de la coopération culturelle ». 12 objectifs ont été retenus ; et plus particulièrement l'analyse et la promotion de la coopération culturelle ainsi que l'échange d'informations et l'inventaire des organisations actives dans le domaine culturel. Cet exercice a permis d'identifier un groupe d'organisations présent à travers l'Europe qui ont confirmé qu'elles remplissaient déjà au moins quatre des activités caractéristiques d'un observatoire de la coopération culturelle.

Suivant cet état des lieux, une enquête auprès des acteurs du domaine culturel a été entreprise pour chercher à connaître les points de vue et les attentes des professionnels du domaine culturel (représentants de musées, théâtres, festivals, bibliothèques, maisons d'édition, etc.) ainsi que l'opinion des décideurs politiques des Etats européens (ministères, régions, administrations locales) quant à leurs besoins et attentes en vue d'un plus grand soutien de la coopération culturelle au niveau européen. Cette enquête s'est poursuivie par une série d'entretiens détaillés avec les personnes clés au sein des institutions culturelles et/ou des réseaux culturels. Un atelier a aussi été organisé au cours duquel les acteurs impliqués ont pu débattre des avantages et des inconvénients des différentes options définies dans le cahier des charges de l'étude : a) aucune action ; b) création d'un tout nouvel observatoire et ; c) mise en réseau des organisations existantes.

### **Principaux résultats**

Tout d'abord, le rapport fait l'inventaire des organisations présentes et qui offrent actuellement une certaine forme de soutien, des informations et une analyse dans le domaine de la coopération culturelle en Europe. Ensuite, il analyse les données de la première enquête auprès de ces organisations. Ce secteur est très complexe et la plupart des organisations opèrent à des niveaux géographiques différents, rendant une classification difficile et rarement entièrement satisfaisante. Les organisations qui remplissent au moins certaines fonctions d'un observatoire de la coopération culturelle peuvent se classer en cinq grands catégories, selon leurs fonctions et leur structure :

- a) ministères, agences et institutions culturelles

- b) autres institutions nationales et régionales impliquées dans la promotion de la coopération culturelle
- c) réseaux culturels transversaux
- d) réseaux culturels thématiques
- e) organisations centrées sur la recherche et la documentation dans le domaine culturel.

La première enquête auprès des organisations existantes a identifié 65 organisations (dans presque tous les pays couverts par l'étude), remplissant au moins quelques-unes des fonctions pouvant être remplies par un observatoire de la coopération culturelle. Ces organisations, la plupart recevant une subvention de fonds publics, comprennent des institutions individuelles avec un accent international dans leur travail, des associations nationales d'institutions et des réseaux européens, mais bien que peu d'entre eux possèdent une réelle envergure européenne. De nombreuses organisations identifiées sont multidisciplinaires alors que les activités les plus communes se rapportent à la promotion de l'échange et à la diffusion d'informations en matière de politique, de législation et de réglementations dans le domaine de la coopération culturelle. L'enquête démontre qu'il existe un grand degré d'expertise et que de nombreuses sources d'information existent dans le domaine de la coopération culturelle.

Il est clair que la coopération culturelle s'est développée en Europe de manière 'ascendante'. Cela présente quelques avantages, notamment que les réseaux et les observatoires actuels bénéficient d'une forte notoriété, mais cela signifie également que le domaine est fragmenté. Le processus de consultation a identifié un nombre de manques et de limitations majeurs entravant le bon fonctionnement de la coopération culturelle et de la mobilité en Europe. Parmi ces entraves figurent la durabilité et la globalité des réseaux actuels, des questions tournant autour de la gestion de l'information et des connaissances ainsi que le manque d'une voix cohérente en matière de politique européenne. Bien que différentes opinions aient été exprimées dans le cadre de l'étude, elles ne pouvaient pas s'expliquer clairement par une quelconque situation géographique ou des secteurs culturels donnés.

Les personnes consultées dans le cadre de l'étude ont été invitées à identifier les priorités en vue d'un plus grand soutien au niveau européen. Un financement accru est la priorité citée dans la majorité des questionnaires. Toutefois, un autre point clef est l'amélioration de la gestion des connaissances dans le secteur. Alors que les informations et les connaissances *de par leur nature* ne manquent pas dans le domaine de la coopération culturelle, la gestion et la diffusion de ces informations ne sont pas coordonnées efficacement pour le moment. Plus spécifiquement, les résultats de la recherche montrent clairement le besoin d'informations pratiques quant aux possibilités de financement et de partenariat. La récolte et l'analyse de statistiques comparatives en matière de coopération culturelle sont également une priorité et une condition préalable pour mieux comprendre la nature et l'impact des activités de coopération culturelle.

Si l'on se réfère aux trois options décrites dans le cahier des charges, l'étude conclut les points suivants:

1. *Aucune mesure*: nos recherches montrent clairement que la situation actuelle n'est pas viable sans une intervention accrue, principalement parce que le secteur nécessite un investissement ne serait-ce que pour maintenir la situation actuelle et répondre à l'évolution du contexte européen.
2. *Création d'un nouvel observatoire européen de la coopération culturelle*: apparemment, les acteurs culturels sont fortement réticents à cette idée. Les préoccupations les plus souvent exprimées concernent le danger de sur-centralisation, la possibilité de créer une bureaucratie inutile et le risque que le travail entrepris par les organisations actuelles soit tout simplement dupliqué. Vu le manque de ressources du secteur pris dans son ensemble, il est probable qu'une grande partie de ses acteurs feront preuve d'un soutien limité envers cette option.
3. *Soutien accru des réseaux d'organisations qui remplissent actuellement au moins plusieurs rôles d'un observatoire*. Cette option a reçu le plus grand soutien parmi les personnes consultées dans le cadre de l'étude de faisabilité. Une mise en réseau plus importante est souvent considérée comme une manière d'optimiser l'utilisation de l'expertise des acteurs culturels existants, de maintenir le système « ascendant » actuel et d'éviter la duplication. Une gestion et une diffusion efficaces des connaissances seraient primordiales si cette option était choisie.

## Recommandations

Il ressort de nos recherches qu'il existe une frustration dans le secteur culturel quant au manque de financement européen dans la coopération culturelle. De plus, les organisations et les réseaux existants craignent que toute nouvelle intervention au niveau européen les prive de leurs ressources. Il en résulte un certain conservatisme lorsque des changements sont évoqués. En outre, le secteur est hautement complexe et déjà "riche en réseaux". Malgré cela, il existe un taux élevé de demandes d'une meilleure gestion des connaissances, bien que la demande de connaissances varie selon le type d'acteur.

A la lumière des résultats de l'étude concernant le manque de soutien populaire, les coûts potentiels et la complexité associée à la création d'un nouvel observatoire européen de la coopération culturelle, nous recommandons de ne pas créer un tel observatoire. Dans ce contexte où les ressources financières disponibles pour la mise en réseau et pour la coopération culturelle sont rares, la création d'un tel observatoire serait très impopulaire et considérée comme une intervention indésirable et imposée.

Toutefois, l'étude de faisabilité recommande trois types d'interventions pour répondre aux besoins identifiés:

1. Soutien continu pour au moins certains des réseaux et organismes actuels actifs dans le domaine de la coopération culturelle et révision du financement de ces réseaux. Cela représente clairement une priorité pour le secteur et il serait sage de capitaliser sur les bénéfices de l'expertise et de la coopération qui se sont développés grâce à des mécanismes "ascendants" par le passé, plutôt que d'essayer de créer de nouvelles institutions et de nouveaux mécanismes qui ne seraient pas nécessairement populaires ou efficaces.

2. Établissement d'un mécanisme de coordination efficace de l'échange et de la diffusion d'informations dans le secteur. L'étude estime qu'un portail Web de la coopération culturelle pourrait fournir un point de référence central de la coopération culturelle. Le site pourrait inclure des informations de base, couvrir les manifestations du moment, contenir des coordonnées de contact et des informations sur la réglementation et offrir une série d'éléments interactifs conçus pour construire une communauté active d'utilisateurs. Le rapport fait le bilan des services offerts par les portails culturels existants et analyse les avantages relatifs de deux options : a) développer le Portail culturel européen actuel hébergé sur Europa et b) créer un nouveau portail sans le label de la Commission qui serait hébergé extérieurement. Peu importe sa conception technique, la valeur ajoutée de ce portail résiderait dans sa nature active et interactive.
  
3. En se basant sur un nombre d'hypothèses de travail, il devient apparent que la différence de coûts entre ces deux options est relativement faible. Par conséquent, les avantages et les inconvénients résident davantage dans l'utilisation et la popularité des deux alternatives. L'étude suggère que les avantages d'un nouveau portail culturel européen concerne principalement la visibilité et l'accessibilité du service et le sens de "propriété" du service. L'étude laisse entendre que les faibles coûts supplémentaires associés au développement d'un nouveau portail externe de la coopération culturelle se justifient par l'augmentation potentielle de son utilisation ainsi que par la flexibilité et l'interactivité du site.
  
4. Essor supplémentaire dans le domaine du développement et de la récolte de statistiques culturelles. Les résultats de l'étude de faisabilité confirment la nécessité de renforcer les efforts actuels dans le domaine des statistiques culturelles afin de mieux comprendre le secteur culturel en général et celui de la coopération culturelle en particulier. Néanmoins, l'étude reconnaît qu'augmenter la disponibilité de données comparables et de statistiques sera coûteuse en termes de temps et de ressources. Les efforts futurs dans ce domaine devraient s'échafauder à partir du travail entrepris à ce jour par Eurostat et se concentrer particulièrement sur le développement d'approches destinées à mesurer l'activité de coopération culturelle et à analyser son impact.

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

ECOTEC Research and Consulting has been commissioned by DG Education and Culture to investigate the feasibility of creating a European Observatory of Cultural Co-operation. This report is the final report for the study, presented to the Commission Services on 18<sup>th</sup> August 2003.

The structure of the report is as follows:

**Section 1: Introduction:** This section summarises the policy context, the definition of the subject as European observatory of cultural co-operation, the purpose of the study and the way the study was carried out.

**Section 2: Study Methodology:** This section includes more detailed information on the methodology used for the Feasibility Study.

**Section 3: Outline of the current situation in Europe.** This section looks at the current situation in Europe in relation to cultural co-operation including the information generated in the first part of our study through our desk research and questionnaires.

**Section 4: Perceived gaps and barriers:** This section will look at the gaps and barriers operating in relation to cultural co-operation in Europe as perceived within our research and in the available literature on this issue in the field.

**Section 5: Priorities identified in the field:** This section lists the priorities identified in the survey results for increased support for cultural co-operation.

**Section 6: The way forward: Advantages and disadvantages of different options:** This section looks at potential responses to this situation, by analysing the advantages and disadvantages of the three options of

- ❑ Creation of a new observatory for cultural co-operation;
- ❑ Networking of the already existing structures fulfilling the function of observatory at a European level;
- ❑ “No Action Scenario”.

The section examines the opinions expressed in the responses to the surveys, interviews and workshop undertaken during the study, before considering the unmet needs identified and the relative benefits of providing additional support potential via the first two options above.

**Section 7: Conclusions and recommendations:** This part presents a summary of the findings and sets out a recommended model for increased support at a European level.

The remainder of this introductory section outlines:

- ❑ the scope of the feasibility study;
- ❑ the details of the objectives of the study and;
- ❑ the EU policy context in which the study is being conducted.

### *1.1 Scope of the Feasibility Study*

ECOTEC was asked to conduct a feasibility study concerning the possible creation of a “European observatory having as its exclusive purpose the analysis of cultural co-operation in Europe”. The terms of reference for the study define the objectives of the European Union in this field as the “observation, follow-up, analysis and description of different forms of cultural co-operation in Europe” and state that these objectives could potentially be achieved through a European Observatory of Cultural Co-operation, undertaking the following key tasks:

1. Presentation of an assessment of cultural co-operation in Europe in the field of music, performing arts, cultural heritage, visual arts and books and reading;
2. Prospective analysis of possible future co-operation, including the identification of possible themes and necessary elements;
3. Promotion of exchange of information in the cultural field between European countries and between these countries and the Community Institutions;
4. Identification of measures of follow-up necessary to strengthen cultural co-operation between European countries and development of synergies with Community actions.

The terms of reference explicitly exclude the analysis of cultural policies from the tasks of a potential observatory<sup>1</sup> and define the cultural sectors to be covered as “music, the performing arts, cultural heritage, the visual arts and books and reading”<sup>2</sup>.

### *1.2 Objectives of the Study*

The detailed objectives of the feasibility study, as set out in the terms of reference, are as follows:

- ❑ To assess and describe the current institutional backdrop in the field of culture in Europe.
- ❑ To assess if and how existing institutions are already fulfilling the actions of an observatory for cultural co-operation.

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<sup>1</sup> The analysis of cultural policies in European states is conducted by the Council of Europe (published in its *Compendium* at [www.culturepolicies.net](http://www.culturepolicies.net)) and is outwith the competencies of the European Union.

<sup>2</sup> The audiovisual sector, including cinema, is thus excluded. This sector is governed by Article 157 of the Treaty on European Union and supported through the MEDIA programme. A European Audiovisual Observatory already exists in Strasbourg.

- ❑ To assimilate this information and classify it according to geographic area, sphere of activity, type of organisation, status of organisation, financing, and communication strategy.
- ❑ To investigate the opinions and expectations of the Member State's public cultural bodies and professionals in the cultural field, regarding the creation of a European observatory for cultural co-operation.
- ❑ To identify the potential users of a European observatory for cultural co-operation.
- ❑ To identify and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages (positive and negative impact) of the creation of a European observatory for cultural co-operation.
- ❑ To identify the objectives and the missions of a European observatory and indicate how it could be structured, how it should be managed, what the working methods and work priorities would be and what resources would be necessary for its operation.
- ❑ To identify and evaluate the advantages and disadvantages (positive and negative impact) of the alternative options that would make it possible to achieve the same goals and to fulfil the same missions, and establish different scenarios likely to satisfy these objectives and missions. The three principal scenarios presented are as follows:  
1. Creation of the observatory; 2. Networking of the already existing structures fulfilling the function of observatory at a European level; 3. "No-action scenario".

### *1.3 EU Policy Context*

This section examines the EU policy context, which forms the backdrop to the feasibility study concerning the possible creation of a European Observatory of Cultural Co-operation. The following paragraphs outline the main elements of current EU policy in the field of cultural co-operation, as a precursor to the analysis in later sections of the report.

Article 151 of the Treaty on the European Union defined, for the first time, three major objectives for community action in the cultural field:

- ❑ to contribute to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, while respecting their national and regional diversity and at the same time bringing the common cultural heritage to the fore;
- ❑ to encourage co-operation between Member States and, if necessary, support and supplement their action in the following areas:
  - improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples;
  - conservation and safeguarding of cultural heritage of European significance;
  - non-commercial cultural exchanges;
  - artistic and literary creation, including in the audiovisual sector.
- ❑ to foster co-operation between the Member States and with third countries and the competent international organisations

*(Article 151, paragraphs 1 to 3, Treaty on European Union)*



In practical terms, these objectives are reflected in the design of the *Culture 2000* Programme<sup>3</sup>, the principal Community measure directly focused on cultural co-operation, and are taken into consideration in the implementation of initiatives in other areas of Community policy, such as Regional Development, Research and Education. Alongside the *Culture 2000* Programme, the EU currently provides direct financial support for a number of cultural organisations and networks and information relevant to the Cultural field through a European Culture Portal. These activities are examined briefly in turn.

### *1.3.1 The Culture 2000 Programme*

The *Culture 2000* Programme was launched at the beginning of 2000 for a period of five years, with a budget of Euro 167 million<sup>4</sup>. The Programme's stated objectives are to encourage the creation of a cultural area common to Europeans and to promote co-operation between cultural operators in order to develop intercultural dialogue, knowledge of history and culture, the transnational dissemination of culture, cultural diversity, artistic creation, the promotion of heritage and socio-economic and social integration.

700 projects were supported from among the approximately 2 000 submitted during the first three years of the *Culture 2000* Programme. These co-operation projects involve on average five operators from the various countries taking part in the Programme<sup>5</sup>.

A network of national Culture Contact Points has been set up to promote and facilitate access to the *Culture 2000* Programme and provide a link between the Programme and national funding bodies and between operators participating in *Culture 2000* and those participating in other Community programmes open for cultural projects<sup>6</sup>. Culture Contact Points are often hosted by institutions connected to Culture Ministries in each of the 30 participating countries, but are, in some cases, run by NGO or private sector organisations. Their principal role is to offer information and assistance to cultural operators wishing to participate in the programme, to ensure contact with national cultural institutions and link with other Community programmes and sources of information.

In order to ensure continuity, the European Commission has proposed that the *Culture 2000* Programme be extended by two years, until the end of 2006.

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<sup>3</sup> Decision 508/2000/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 14<sup>th</sup> February 2000 establishing the Culture 2000 Programme.

<sup>4</sup> Culture 2000 replaced three earlier cultural programmes: *Kaleidoscope* (1996-1999), which aimed to encourage artistic and cultural creation and co-operation of a European dimension; *Ariane* (1997-1999), promoting books and reading through the translation and dissemination of literary works; and *Raphaël* (1997-1999) in the field of cultural heritage.

<sup>5</sup> Designing the future programme of cultural co-operation for the European Union after 2006 – Public Consultation Document, DG Education and Culture, April 2003.

<sup>6</sup> See Annex I.V of Decision 508/2000/EC



### 1.3.2 Direct Funding for Organisations

From the operating credits of the general budget, the EU can grant support aimed at covering the operating costs of organisations whose work is in the European cultural interest.

In 2003, grants under budget line A3042 of the European Union's budget have supported a total of 31 organisations of European cultural interest. These include Orchestras, such as the European Union Youth Orchestra, Prizes, including the *Prix Europe pour le Théâtre* and networks and associations, such as the European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA) and the European Forum for the Arts and Heritage (EFAH).

For the year 2003, the total budget allocated to budget line A3042 (Subsidy to organisations with a European cultural interest) was €4 263 000, compared to €4 228 000 in 2002 and €3 741 000 in 2001. Part A of section 3 of the Community budget is set to disappear from the 2004 budget onwards. The future of support for these organisations is currently under review.

### 1.3.3 The European Culture Portal

The "European Culture Portal" (<http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture>), hosted on the Commission's *Europa* server, was launched in 2002. It is designed to provide a single point of access for information on EU cultural measures, including in the field of cultural co-operation. The portal is provided in five languages (German, English, French, Spanish and Italian) and structured around five main sections:

- "Fields of Activity" provides information about Community activities in each of nine cultural fields, such as visual arts, architecture and cinema;
- "Europe in Action" focuses on Community policies under eight headings, including cultural co-operation. The Cultural Co-operation section profiles the Culture 2000 Programme and provides links to other relevant EU websites;
- "Funding" provides details of European funding opportunities for culture-related activities;
- "National Websites" provides links to national cultural authorities and, for some countries, national cultural portals and;
- "Events" lists EU-sponsored cultural events, such as the European Capital of Culture projects and initiatives in favour of intercultural dialogue.

## 2.0 *STUDY METHODOLOGY*

### 2.1 *Mapping Potential Observatories of Cultural Co-operation*

The first phase of the study was designed to assess the existing situation in Europe in terms of organisations that currently carry out all or some of the roles of an “observatory of cultural co-operation”. This phase of the study took as its starting point a definition of the roles of an “observatory of cultural co-operation” based on the list of characteristic objectives set out below<sup>7</sup>:

1. Exploring cultural co-operation in Europe in the fields of music, performing arts, cultural heritage, architecture, visual arts, books and reading, archives and libraries.
2. Prospective analysis of possible future development of cultural co-operation such as the identification of possible themes and prerequisites.
3. Identification of measures to strengthen cultural co-operation between European countries.
4. Identification of measures to strengthen European cultural co-operation through synergies with Community actions.
5. Promotion of exchange of information in the cultural co-operation field between European countries and these countries and the European Institutions.
6. Providing information on policy, legislation and regulations related to cultural co-operation.
7. Fostering links between researchers and policy-makers in the cultural co-operation arena.
8. Establishing an inventory of institutions, organisations, government agencies, foundations and other bodies active in the field of culture, and, in particular, in the field of cultural co-operation;
9. Bringing together these various bodies for the purpose of sharing experience and exploiting synergies on cultural co-operation (organisation of workshops, conferences, etc);
10. Collating statistics on cultural co-operation.
11. Identifying and disseminating best practice on cultural co-operation;
12. Facilitating and/or carrying out research on cultural co-operation

Internet and document research techniques were used to identify organisations or networks fulfilling four or more of these roles, across the 32 countries included in the scope of the study. The research was conducted on a country by country basis to ensure thoroughness and optimal geographical coverage.

Following consultation with the Commission services, the 105 organisations identified through this approach, together with national culture ministries in all 32 countries<sup>8</sup>, were sent

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<sup>7</sup> This list of objectives was developed in the early stages of the feasibility study, by unravelling the four broad objectives contained in the study terms of reference

<sup>8</sup> National Ministries with responsibility for cultural affairs in 32 countries (including the culture departments of the three Belgian Communities: French, Flemish and German-speaking).

a first phase questionnaire by e-mail. This questionnaire, a copy of which is included at Annex A, covered the following key points:

- Details of organisation (location, contacts, legal status)
- Geographical area of operation
- Funding
- Networking
- Sectoral Coverage of the organisation
- Activities undertaken (based on the established list)
- Communication strategy
- Barriers to development

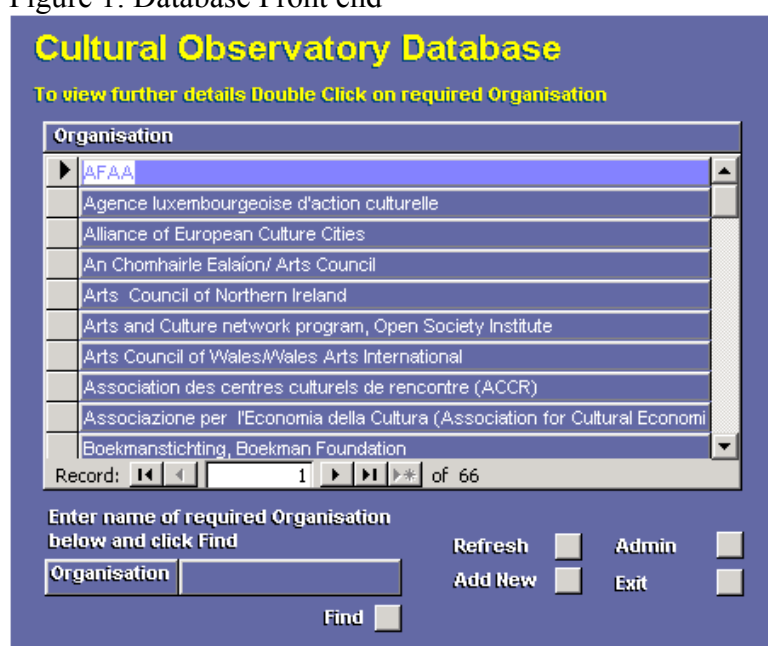
Data from the returned questionnaires have been entered into a database. This exercise enabled the identification of a group of organisations throughout Europe, who confirmed through their responses that they perform four or more of the activities characteristic of an observatory of cultural co-operation. More details on these organisations are presented in Section 3.2.

In total, 83 responses were received, equating to a 60% response rate.

## 2.2 Developing the database

The Cultural Observatory database was created using Microsoft Access 2000. It provides a searchable front-end (*Figure 1*) which lists all of the organisations for which information has been collected.

Figure 1: Database Front end



The database structure adheres to the structure of the questionnaires designed for use in the consultation stage of the study. Data are collected within seven related sections: contact

details; organisation; geographical aspect; activity; further organisational information; views; and clients and other information. The information collected in the database is stored in seven underlying tables.

## *2.2 Stakeholder Survey*

Following the mapping exercise referred to above, a survey of stakeholders in the cultural field was conducted. The survey investigated the points of view and expectations of the public services in the European States (Ministries, regions, local administrations) and of professionals in the cultural field (representatives of museums, theatres, festivals, libraries, publishing houses, etc) in relation to their needs and aspirations for greater support for co-operation at a European level.

Three different versions of the survey were sent out:

- ❑ A survey to cultural stakeholders
- ❑ A survey to policy makers (national, regional and local)
- ❑ A follow-up survey to cultural organisations who were recipients of the first questionnaire.

In total, 426 surveys were sent. Annex A includes a breakdown of recipients in terms of geographical representation, type of organisation and cultural sector covered. The criteria for identifying organisations and the questions and structure of the surveys were previously agreed with the Commission. The organisations were identified through the previous questionnaire, desk-research (particularly internet searches) and our panel of experts, who provided additional relevant contacts.

The survey questionnaires are included at Annex A. They broadly focused on the following main issues:

- ❑ current co-operation and exchange
- ❑ current barriers to co-operation and exchange
- ❑ needs and aspirations in terms of greater support at a European level for cultural co-operation, information, research and exchange of best practice
- ❑ assessment of the appropriateness of the three scenarios envisaged through an analysis of the advantages and disadvantages (positive and negative impact) of each scenario
- ❑ proposals as to the possible structure of a European Observatory (if this had been identified as a positive option) including its working methods (e.g. dissemination), priorities and potential users.

A large number (133) of survey responses was received. However, this equates to just a 31% response rate. This is a much lower rate than encountered for the first questionnaire, despite the fact that ECOTEC sent more questionnaires than originally planned at the proposal stage (426 as opposed to the 200-250 originally proposed) and also sent out a series of reminder emails. There may be a number of reasons for this low response rate:

- ❑ the survey was specifically aimed at investigating the opinions of a larger target group, including stakeholders and policy makers, some of whom may not currently be involved in cultural co-operation activities. It must be borne in mind that many of the organizations targeted may not have considered the issue of a European Observatory of Cultural Co-operation to be relevant to them. Furthermore, several survey responses and subsequent interviews highlighted the fact that many cultural organizations find the requirements of providing information and data particularly difficult and have very limited administrative capacity. This should also be considered as a factor, when assessing the survey response rate;
- ❑ the survey was initially circulated in English, on the grounds that this language is the most widely spoken second language in Europe. Although the survey was subsequently sent in English and French in a reminder e-mail and efforts were made to translate surveys when particular requests were made, this may have impacted on the number of returns;
- ❑ the survey was specifically aimed at investigating the opinions of respondents on the different options for support for cultural cooperation at the European level. Where organisations did not have strong opinions they may not have felt it necessary to return the form.

### *2.3 Interviews*

The survey was followed by a series of interviews with key individuals in cultural institutions and cultural networks, identified through the surveys and questionnaires. The purpose of carrying out interviews at this stage was to gain a fuller understanding of the issues involved. The interviewees came from different fields and had different areas of knowledge and expertise. They included representatives from institutions from both the public and private sectors (e.g. dance institutes, museums, professional representations), policy makers (European Parliament, national and regional governments), experts and academics.

To identify the sample of interviewees the study team adopted a set of criteria to ensure a balanced sample in terms of geographical coverage, the nature of the organisation represented, and the different cultural sectors. We also endeavoured to achieve an even spread of organisations that had expressed a preference for each of the options under study (creation of the observatory, networking of the already existing structures fulfilling the function of an observatory at a European level and “No-action scenario”) in their survey responses. The criteria used for identifying the sample are included in Annex A. 30 interviews were carried out, five face to face and the remainder by telephone.

### *2.4 The Workshop*

The areas of expertise represented among the interviewees were also represented in a workshop that was held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2003 and attended by 19 participants, including Commission representatives and ECOTEC staff. The workshop was held at this stage to

allow a detailed discussion amongst stakeholders, who had the opportunity to elaborate upon their individual viewpoints.

The aims of the workshop were to:

- ❑ set out the problems and the needs from an institutional, policy and user perspective;
- ❑ explore how the different options under study could solve the problems and meet the needs identified;
- ❑ to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of building up an observatory from scratch;
- ❑ to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of support for existing networks;
- ❑ to discuss the consequences of taking no action.

Draft lists of participants and a draft agenda for the workshop were presented to the Commission during the first progress meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2003. The final list of organizations represented at the workshop is included at Annex A. Through conducting the interviews ECOTEC was able to identify individuals and organisations with divergent viewpoints, thereby allowing a proper debate of these issues to explore as fully as possible the advantages and disadvantages of the different options under study, including their relative cost/efficiency ratios. ECOTEC also ensured that the participants together constituted a relatively balanced sample in relation to the type of organisation and sector, including ensuring proper representation by Central Eastern European and EFTA countries.

### 3.0 THE CURRENT SITUATION IN EUROPE

This section of the report assesses the existing situation in Europe in terms of organisations and networks that currently carry out some of the roles of a potential observatory of cultural co-operation. As highlighted in section 2.1 of the methodology, a list of potential activities and objectives for such an observatory were defined in the early stages of the project. This list was designed to be as comprehensive as possible, while taking into account the very clear focus of the study on cultural co-operation as opposed to cultural policy in a wider sense.

The first part of this section provides an overview of organisations that, on preliminary analysis, appeared to fulfil at least some of the defined roles of a potential observatory. The second part analyses the findings of the survey of such organisations, conducted to ‘test’ the preliminary assumptions and learn more about the sector.

It has been clear from the outset of the work that the range of bodies currently providing some degree of support, information and analysis in the field of cultural co-operation in Europe today is highly complex. Indeed, recent attempts to develop a typology of the different players active in the field of cultural co-operation in Europe<sup>9</sup>, illustrate the difficulty of classifying organisations with very varied remits and diverse operational structures in an entirely satisfactory fashion. In the specific context of this study, the matter is further complicated by the lack of a clear-cut distinction between activities that deal specifically with “cultural co-operation” and those that concern wider issues of “cultural policy”.

Despite these clear difficulties, the remainder of this section presents a structured overview of organisations active in the field of cultural co-operation in Europe, before examining the key findings of the organisation survey.

#### 3.1 Organisations Active in the Field of Cultural Co-operation in Europe

It is possible to identify five main groups of organisation that fulfil at least some of the roles defined for a potential observatory of cultural co-operation in Europe. This grouping, determined broadly on the basis of the function and structure of the organisations, is as follows:

- ❑ Government Departments, Agencies and Cultural Institutes;
- ❑ Other national and regional institutions involved in promoting cultural co-operation;
- ❑ Umbrella cultural networks;
- ❑ Thematic cultural networks;
- ❑ Organisations focused on cultural research and documentation;

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<sup>9</sup> Rod Fisher develops a typology with twelve categories of organisation in his ECF discussion paper: Fisher, Rod *A Step change in cross border engagement? The Potential of a European Observatory of Cultural Co-operation – An initial discussion paper for the European Cultural Foundation*, International Intelligence on Culture, London, October 2002. See also the ERICarts Briefing Note *Third Sector Actors Monitoring Cultural Co-operation and Cultural Policy Developments in Europe*, ERICarts Secretariat, February 2002.



As amply demonstrated elsewhere<sup>10</sup>, it is certainly possible to subdivide these groupings further and to argue over the allocation of particular organisations to one group or another. Moreover, a small number of organisations fulfilling relevant tasks in the field of cultural co-operation do not fit easily into any of these groups<sup>11</sup>. However, the classification presented here is not intended to be comprehensive, but rather as a heuristic tool for understanding this complex sector and a point of departure for much of the subsequent analysis.

### 3.1.1 Government Departments, Agencies and Cultural Institutes

This group of organisations includes public bodies with a primarily national focus, but which have international departments, such as ministries of culture, arts and heritage councils, as well as national cultural institutes, such the *Goethe Institut* or the *British Council*, which are by definition international in orientation.

In many European countries, responsibility for cultural co-operation activities (often bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements) is often shared between foreign ministries and ministries for culture. Cultural institutes such as the *Goethe Institut*, *British Council* and the *Instituto Cervantes* are generally funded from the foreign ministry budget, while responsibility for funding co-operation projects involving domestic institutions generally lies with ministries of culture or arts councils (operating on an independent or semi-independent agency model). Most ministries focus on policy issues and are not involved directly in the design and implementation of cultural co-operation activities<sup>12</sup>.

In general, these types of organisation conduct a variety of research and analysis for their own purposes and publish policy documents. The level of information provision related specifically to cultural co-operation tends to be limited, although ministry websites and portals often provide links to counterparts in other countries, as well as cultural institutions and organisations in their own country.

In many countries, sector specific public agencies in different cultural sectors have international strategies and a role in supporting cultural co-operation. One example of this is *Re:source*, *The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries* in the UK.

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<sup>10</sup> Cf Fisher 2002

<sup>11</sup> The European Cultural Foundation (ECF), headquartered in Amsterdam, is one such organisation. Founded in 1954, the ECF is independent foundation promoting cultural participation and co-operation in Europe and worldwide that runs its own programmes and awards grants. As such, it is not a network, nor an organisation focused primarily on research and documentation.

<sup>12</sup> One clear exception is the Ministry of Culture, Higher Education and Research in Luxembourg, which is directly involved in a number of cultural co-operation activities.



*Box 1 Re:source - The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries*

Re:source was launched in April 2000 as the strategic body working with and for museums, archives and libraries, tapping the potential for collaboration between them. The new organisation's main objectives are "providing strategic leadership and promoting change; acting as an authoritative advocate and champion for the cultural heritage sector; and advising on best practice and the delivery of specific objectives". In fulfilling these roles, Re:source works in partnership and through collaboration with a wide range of institutions, umbrella bodies, government departments and national and international organisations, both within and beyond the cultural heritage and libraries sector.

Re:source is currently in the process of implementing its international strategy, with a focus on "mutually beneficial relationships with concrete outcomes". The agency also provides policy advice on cultural co-operation in the museums, archives and libraries sector to the UK government.

Operational Focus: cultural history, history, cultural heritage, preservation of cultural heritage, museums, cultural information, information, documentation, archives, libraries

Geographical Focus: National (UK)

Status: Public Agency

Source of Income: Public Budget

Working language(s): English

Activities: research, policy advice, information services, meetings, networking activities

Website: <http://www.resource.gov.uk/>

*3.1.2 Other national or regional institutions involved in promoting cultural co-operation*

A wide range of bodies at national and regional level in European states have some role in analysing, promoting and disseminating information about cultural co-operation. The operational focus of these organisations varies, but often combines direct support for cultural co-operation projects (financial, organisational, strategic) with some element of analysis and dissemination of information. These organisations may conduct some research and documentation activities, but this tends not to be the primary focus of their work.

Organisations that perform research and documentation activities as their core role are dealt with later in this section.

This category of organisation is necessarily very broad and includes a wide range of publicly-funded, not for profit and private bodies. Examples include the former Soros Centres for Contemporary Arts in Central and Eastern Europe and the Theatre Institutes in a number of countries. As an illustration, a profile of the Center for Contemporary Arts in Ljubljana is presented below.

*Box 2 Center for Contemporary Arts - Ljubljana*

The Center for Contemporary Arts in Ljubljana (SCCA-Ljubljana) is a non-profit organisation, and a constitutive member of ICAN (International Contemporary Art Network) based in Amsterdam (see below). It functions as a production, research and educational centre with a publicly accessible service platform.

On the basis of its experience and contacts with countries from Western and Eastern Europe, especially in the Region, the Center cooperates with a number of international partner organisations. The Center's objective is to produce, stimulate and mediate innovative artistic and interpretative practices and to encourage international links between different players in the cultural sector. It aims to equip participants and users of contemporary art (artists, curators, critics, audience) with knowledge, tools and skills necessary for independent and conscious operation within the art system.

Operational Focus: Development of contemporary arts (multi disciplinary) and co-operation  
Geographical Focus: Central and Eastern Europe, Europe  
Status: Not for Profit Organisation  
Source of Income: Grants  
Activities: Co-ordination of artistic projects and programmes, publications, education and research programmes, dissemination and archiving of information  
Website: <http://www.ljudmila.org/scca/indexeng.html>

### 3.1.3 Umbrella Cultural Networks

A number of multi-disciplinary cultural networks have been formed at a European level, as forums designed to bring together a wide range of players in the European cultural field and, in a number of cases, to act as an interface between the European cultural sector and the institutions of the European Union. One example is the *European Forum for Arts and Heritage (EFAH)*, established to be an advocate for the cultural sector in Europe and a platform for the concerns of those engaged in transnational cultural co-operation<sup>13</sup>. Other examples include *CIRCLE*, *Culturelink* and, in Central and Eastern Europe, *ICAN* (profiled below).

#### Box 3 International Contemporary Art Network (ICAN)

In 1999 and 2000, following the restructuring of the Soros Foundations, all Soros Centers for Contemporary Arts started to become independent and were transformed into non-governmental organisations under the membership of the new association i\_CAN (International Contemporary Art Network) based in Amsterdam. i\_CAN's mission is to be an open platform for cross-cultural exchange and collaboration in the field of contemporary art, involving artists, critics, curators and other art professionals and institutions from Central and Eastern Europe

Operational Focus: Information exchange in field of contemporary art within Central and Eastern Europe and between CEE and the rest of the world. Participating in international cultural discourse and promoting the contemporary art of the CEE region.

Geographical Focus: Central and Eastern Europe

Status: Network

Source of Income: Member insitutions

Working language(s): English (and member languages)

Activities: Collecting, maintaining and disseminating information, strategic reflection, professional advocacy for members

Website: <http://ican.artnet.org/ican/>

### 3.1.4 Thematic cultural networks

Thematic networks exist at European level in many of the cultural sectors that fall within the scope of this study. These networks, a number of which receive funding under budget line A3042 of the European Union budget, operate in the fields of the performing and visual arts, books and publishing, music and cultural heritage and bring together national and regional level associations and institutions. Table 1 below lists the principal thematic European cultural networks, including all the networks supported by the EU general budget.

<sup>13</sup> See <http://www.eurplace.org/orga/efah/>

*Table 1: European Thematic Cultural Networks*

<i>Sector</i>	<i>Network</i>	<i>EU supported</i>
<i>Performing Arts</i>	European Network of Information Centres for the Performing Arts (ENICPA)	
	Informal European Theatre Meeting (IETM)	✓
	European Theatre Convention (ETC)	✓
	Union des Théâtres de l'Europe (UTE)	✓
<i>Visual Arts</i>	European Council of Artists (ECA)	✓
<i>Books and Publishing</i>	European Writers' Congress (EWC)	✓
<i>Music</i>	Music Organisations of Europe (MORE)	
	European Jazz Network (EJN)	
	European Conference of Promoters of New Music (ECPNM)	
	European Concert Halls Organisation (ECHO)	
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	Network of European Museum Organisations (NEMO)	✓
	Europa Nostra	✓
	European Network of Cultural Centres in Historic Monuments (ACCR)	
<i>Libraries and Archives</i>	European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA)	

As an example, the *European Network of Information Centres for the Performing Arts (ENICPA)*, one of the key European thematic cultural networks in the field of the performing arts and aims to function as a meeting place for information and documentation organisations. The main goal of the network is to distribute and to make available a broad range of information about the professional performing arts to arts professionals.

In addition to the networks listed in Table 1, several networks cover a range of cultural sectors, but still have a thematic focus. For example:

- Two EU-supported networks are focused on the provision of arts and culture for young people: the *European Network of Arts Organisations for Children and Young People (EUnetART)* and *EURONET, the European Children's Network*. *EUnetART* is a network of over 100 professional arts organisations that work with children and young people. It is conceived as a forum for exchange and a platform for developing co-operation projects. With its secretariat in Amsterdam, the network is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and receives additional support from DG Education and Culture. *EURONET* is a coalition of national networks and NGOs campaigning for the interests and rights of children, with a co-ordination office in Brussels<sup>14</sup>. Its central aim is raising the profile of children's rights on the European political and policy agenda.

<sup>14</sup> See <http://www.europeanchildrensnetwork.org/default.htm>

- The *European Network of Cultural Centres (ENCC)* has the objective of providing a platform for the exchange of experiences in managing and programming of multidisciplinary cultural centres. It aims to encourage co-operation and exchange in the areas of exhibitions, training project and staff development (including staff exchanges). The network, with a secretariat in Brussels, has in the past attempted to develop study groups on themes such as multi-culturalism and access to the arts for those with disabilities, but has not succeeded in making them operational.
  
- Two further networks exist in the field of education and training. The *European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centres (ENCATC)* brings together professional organisations that provide training in arts administration, while the *European League of Institutes of the Arts (ELIA)* is an independent network of Arts Education Institutes<sup>15</sup>.

### 3.1.5 Organisations focused on cultural research and documentation

This category of organisation groups a diverse collection of institutions and networks whose primary focus in the field of cultural co-operation is research and documentation, as opposed to direct support for or participation in cooperative cultural projects. As such, these bodies fulfil an “observation” function in the strict sense of the term and, indeed, often contain the word “Observatory” in their name.

Such “observatories” vary in terms of their geographical focus. At a pan-European level, a number of organisations are of particular interest. The *Interarts Foundation*, based in Barcelona, carries the title “European Observatory for Cultural Research and International Co-operation” and acts as a research centre and advisory body in the field of cultural co-operation. It gathers data on area-based cultural policy practices in Europe and elsewhere, provides training and networking, undertakes focused research projects and provides consultancy in cultural development strategies.

Another organisation in the field of cultural research with a pan-European focus is the *European Research Institute for Comparative Cultural Policy and the Arts (ERICarts)*. Founded in 1993 by member of the *CIRCLE* network, *ERICarts* aims to establish an independent and multinational research institute focused on cultural policy and media developments, cultural education and the status of arts and media professions and fields.

The Regional Observatory on Financing Culture in East-Central Europe, known as the Budapest Observatory, conducts similar cultural policy research. It seeks partnership and co-operation in the broadly defined East-Central-European region. The post-communist countries of the region face similar basic problems in the field of financing culture. However, little is known about the issues, successes and failures of the dramatic transformation of cultural funding in the region. The Budapest Observatory aims to fill this information gap. As a resource organisation, the Observatory wants to facilitate research, collect and provide

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<sup>15</sup> *ELIA* is supported by, among others, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, as well as the EU and the European Cultural Foundation.

information, establish contacts in areas that include the financing of culture, cultural policy, legislation and statistics

The *Observatoire des Politiques Culturelles (OPC)* in Grenoble provides an interesting illustration of a publicly-funded cultural research body. Although its activities are focused primarily on national and regional cultural policy, it also covers some aspects of transnational cultural co-operation. Created in 1989 as a national body, designed to support thinking around the decentralisation and evolution of territorial cultural policies in France, the OPC acts as an interface between the French state, local and regional government, professionals working in artistic or cultural institutions and the researchers, organising studies and meetings and information provision

### *3.2 Results from the Survey of Cultural Co-operation Organisations*

In order to gain a better understanding of the work of the organisations outlined above, a sample of 140 organisations were asked to complete a brief survey questionnaire, during the first phase of the study. The questionnaire was designed to obtain standardised information on the organisations' status, geographical and sectoral focus, activities in the field of cultural co-operation, membership of networks, communication strategies and development plans.

Out of the 140 questionnaires sent to organisations and networks identified in the 32 countries included within the scope of the study, 83 responses were received (equating to a 60% response rate). The detailed survey results are contained in a database, supplied to the Commission Services along with this report. In the case of many of the networks outlined in the previous section, questionnaires were, where possible, sent to secretariats, often based in national organisations, which are themselves active in the field of international cultural co-operation. In some of these cases, joint responses (for the network and the national organisation) were received.

Of the 83 organisations that responded to the survey, 65 indicated that they performed four or more of the activities in the field of cultural co-operation identified as characteristic of an observatory of cultural co-operation. These organisations can be considered to be existing types of observatory of cultural co-operation, albeit operating at different geographical levels and with different remits. A list of the organisations identified in this way can be found at Annex B. In light of the methodology used to arrive at the list and the less than 100% response rate to the survey, this list should in no way be viewed as definitive. However, it does provide a good indication of the range of organisations currently performing tasks of relevance to cultural co-operation in Europe.

The rest of this section analyses in more detail the status and functions of the 65 organisations identified through the survey to be conducting activities similar to those of a cultural observatory. This section ends with some general conclusions about current provision of support, information and research in the field of trans-national cultural co-operation in Europe today.

### *3.2.1 Status of Organisations*

The range of organisations responding to the questionnaire included bodies with very varied organisational status and functions. As such, the general findings of the survey presented here should be interpreted with care. For a full understanding of the activities of the sector, each organisation should be viewed on an individual basis. It is nevertheless, possible to highlight some general trends within what could be termed loosely “the cultural co-operation sector”.

Nearly half of the organisations that responded to the survey are public institutions (32 out of 65), the majority of which are linked to a public policy making body, such as a national culture ministry or regional government. The majority of the remaining organisations have non-governmental (NGO) status, while a small number (10 out of 65) are private companies.

Over 85% of responding organisations receive at least some funding in the form of public subsidies, while nearly 45% cite grants as a source of finance. It is noteworthy that relatively few organisations rely on donations or commercial activities for their revenue.

Networking plays a significant role among organisations identified as potential observatories of cultural co-operation. A majority of respondents (two thirds) are members of at least one network, while a fifth of organisations actually lead networks. Only a fifth of organisations do not participate in a network at all

When asked directly whether they consider themselves to be “observatories of cultural co-operation”, more than half of organisations responded affirmatively. This figure should be interpreted with care, as the criteria used by each organisation to judge whether or not they are observatories of cultural co-operation are subjective and variable. It is interesting that over 40% of organisations displaying characteristics of an observatory of cultural co-operation, defined in terms of the activities they carry out, do not, in fact, consider themselves to be a cultural observatory.

Of the 34 Culture Ministries<sup>16</sup> contacted, 15 replied to the study team. Four ministries replied, without completing the questionnaire, to state that they do not consider themselves to be an observatory of cultural co-operation and that they felt the survey was not relevant to them. This said, another 11 Ministries did complete the questionnaire and the one Ministry of Culture stated that they considered themselves to be a “cultural observatory”

### *3.2.2 Sectoral and Geographical Focus*

The results of the survey demonstrate the inter-disciplinary nature of the targeted organisations. Over 80% of respondent organisations cover the fields of “theatre”, “visual arts” and “books and publishing”. A significant majority of organisations cover all the cultural sectors listed in the questionnaire, as shown in the table below.

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<sup>16</sup> National Culture Ministries in 31 countries and the Culture Departments at the Ministries of the three Belgian Communities (Flemish, French and German-speaking).



Table 2: Cultural Sectors of Activity

CULTURAL SECTORS OF ACTIVITY	
<i>Theatre</i>	84%
<i>Visual Arts</i>	82%
<i>Books and Publishing</i>	81%
<i>Music</i>	79%
<i>Cultural Heritage</i>	70%
<i>Archives and Libraries</i>	69%
<i>Architecture</i>	63%

Of those organisations that responded, nearly 72% stated that there is a European dimension to their activities, while a similar percentage reported that they operate at a national level. Only 25% claim to operate at the regional level. When asked whether they foresaw expanding their activities to a wider geographical area, more than a third of organisations (25 out of 65) replied that they planned to do so in the near future, or were in the process of doing so.

The fact that a large majority of organisations claim to have Europe-wide geographical coverage masks significant differences in the extent and type of this coverage. The questionnaire asked specifically which countries the organisation covered; many organisations responded by listing only one or two countries outside their own or particular regions of Europe (such as Central and Eastern Europe).

### 3.2.3 *Types of Activity*

The questionnaire asked respondents to indicate whether or not their organisation performed each of the activities in the list of characteristic roles and objectives established at the beginning of the study. As can be seen from the table below, the most common activities performed by the respondent organisations relate to promoting the exchange of information and providing information on policy, legislation and regulations in the field of cultural co-operation. A high proportion of the organisations surveyed (73%) also maintain an inventory of institutions, organisations, and government agencies active in the field of cultural co-operation. Relatively few organisations have a direct role in financing cultural co-operation (37%) or collating statistical information in the field (43%).

Table 3: Types of Activity Performed

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	
<i>Promotion of exchange of information in the cultural field between European countries and these countries and the Community Institutions.</i>	84%
<i>Providing information on policy, legislation and regulations related to cultural co-operation.</i>	81%
<i>Inventory of institutions, organisations, government agencies, foundations and other bodies active in the field of cultural co-operation.</i>	73%
<i>Exploring and assessing of cultural co-operation in Europe in the fields of music, performing arts, cultural heritage, architecture, visual arts, books and reading, archives</i>	69%

<i>and libraries.</i>	
<i>Prospective analysis of possible future cultural co-operation, including the identification of possible themes and its prerequisites.</i>	67%
<i>Bringing together various bodies for the purpose of sharing experience and exploiting synergies.</i>	63%
<i>Identification of measures of follow-up necessary to strengthen cultural co-operation between European countries.</i>	58%
<i>Fostering links between researchers and policy-makers in the cultural co-operation arena.</i>	58%
<i>Identification of measures to strengthen European cultural co-operation through synergies with Community actions.</i>	54%
<i>Identification and dissemination of best practice on cultural co-operation.</i>	54%
<i>Facilitation and/or carrying out of research on cultural co-operation.</i>	54%
<i>Collating statistics on cultural co-operation.</i>	43%
<i>Financing of cultural co-operation, e.g. sponsorship.</i>	37%

### 3.2.4 Barriers to Development

The questionnaire asked respondents whether there was a gap in their activities that they would like to develop further. A majority of organisations (67%) indicated this was the case. When asked what are the most significant barriers to further development of their activities, a lack of funding and personnel were the most frequently mentioned answers (by 35 and 27 out of 65 respondents respectively).

Table 4: Barriers to Development (Out of 65)

BARRIERS TO DEVELOPMENT	
<i>Funding</i>	35
<i>Personnel</i>	27
<i>Other</i>	9
<i>Expertise</i>	7

### 3.3 The Current Situation in Europe: Initial Conclusions

On the basis of the initial overview of organisations working in the field of cultural co-operation in Europe and the results of the survey, it is possible to draw some initial conclusions about the “cultural co-operation sector” in Europe today.

- Many organisations are active in the field of cultural co-operation and perform at least some of the functions that could be fulfilled by a potential observatory of cultural co-operation. These organisations include principally individual institutions with an international focus to their work, national associations of institutions, and European networks.
- A high proportion of these organisations are either public institutions or receive a significant element of their operating costs from public budgets. In a significant number of cases, ministries of culture fulfil at least four of the functions of an observatory of cultural co-operation, but do not generally see themselves as performing such an observatory role.



- ❑ A high level of expertise exists in the field, both in terms of actively designing and implementing cultural co-operation projects and the analysis and evaluation of issues related to cultural co-operation. These human resources already support co-operation and exchange and, a priori, have the potential to be exploited further.
- ❑ Information resources relevant to cultural co-operation, such as list of organisations and their membership, reports and studies and guidance exist in many locations and from many sources.
- ❑ Organisations that perform at least some of the tasks that could be performed by a potential observatory of cultural co-operation have been identified in nearly all the countries covered by the study.
- ❑ A significant proportion of the organisations identified are multi-disciplinary in their focus. Even organisations with a defined sectoral focus, such as theatre organisations cover a number of artistic sectors (for example, dance and music as well as theatre).
- ❑ The complexity of the sector is also very evident. The sheer range of organisations operating at different geographical level is difficult to classify and define.
- ❑ Although European level networks exist in most cultural sectors, these vary in their aims and often lack the resources to perform a wide range of analysis, support and information activities.
- ❑ Overall, very few organisations are truly pan-European in their geographical coverage. Many networks have gaps in their membership, while most research institutions and observatories are region and sector specific in their focus.

## 4.0 PERCEIVED GAPS AND BARRIERS

### 4.1 Introduction

In order to understand perceived gaps and barriers in relation to cultural co-operation in Europe, it is important first to understand what might be the goals behind cultural co-operation. The workshop held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June came to the conclusion that cultural co-operation in Europe could be seen to achieve the following key goals:

- ❑ Building shared European culture and citizenship (and potentially European cohesion and competitiveness particularly in the context of the Lisbon agenda)
- ❑ Promotion of cultural collaboration between different organisations and places to encourage innovation, productivity and a fertile cultural field
- ❑ Making better uses of existing resources, mobilising the use of assets and encouraging better use of funds, technology, information
- ❑ Creating a common ground for agenda setting for the cultural sector

The first of these goals (the potential role of culture in building shared European culture and citizenship) could be said to be rising up the political agenda in Europe, particularly in the context of enlargement, and several participants in the workshop pointed out that culture was a key vehicle for encouraging mutual understanding in Europe. It was suggested, for example, that cultural figureheads tend to be better known across national borders in comparison to politicians and industrialists and are therefore useful points of reference in developing common understanding.

However, in reality it can be argued that cultural co-operation has only developed in so far as it has helped individual organisations and cultural actors develop their own projects and achieve their own goals, particularly in relation to goals two and three above (encouraging innovation, productivity and a fertile cultural field, and making better uses of existing resources).

Within our research it is apparent that the organisations and actors contacted found cultural co-operation in Europe to be valuable both in furthering cultural projects, mobilising resources and tackling issues that are not necessarily supported at the national and regional level. It was pointed out by some respondents that cultural activities are being supported less and less by 'the state' in Europe, and this is also a trend within the accession countries, where the national focus is currently on those issues directly relevant to economic and social integration under enlargement. Even where cultural organisations are supported, this is sometimes restricted to activities which promote national and regional identities. As one of our interview respondents pointed out, "*If the funding comes from national governments they expect an enhancement of the national image*".

Although some cultural networks and institutions, such as the Cultural Contact points, have been developed on the basis of European initiatives like *Culture 2000* and the precedents *Kaleidoscope*, *Ariane* and *Raphaël*, it is evident that the development of cultural co-operation

in Europe has largely been a result of a ‘bottom-up process’. This has resulted in the existence of a large number of ‘communities of practice’, different and sometimes overlapping networks, and observatories which are not necessarily evenly distributed in geographical terms and between sectors. In addition, collaboration is happening across Europe between individual cultural actors on particular projects, exhibitions and events which are often more spontaneous and based on personal contacts than strategically planned.

The current situation can be seen to be in some senses positive – current observatories and networks are valued and ‘owned’ in that they have stemmed from real needs rather than being seen as imposed or in any sense bureaucratic. In addition it can be argued that the lack of strategic coordination for artistic collaboration is in some respects natural given that European artistic activity is increasingly independent from state control and results from a sum of independent successive projects. Cultural co-operation in this instance depends less on a process of formal exchange between institutionalised programs but more on a favourable environment for artists and other cultural actors.

However, our research has illustrated that the current situation presents a series of gaps and persisting barriers in relation to the development of cultural co-operation in Europe, both in terms of overall sustainability of the field and in terms of creating a favourable environment for artistic collaboration by individual actors. The results of our survey on gaps and barriers are identified in more detail in Annex C. However, to summarise, the following main issues were raised within the surveys, interviews and workshop discussion:

#### *4.2. Current coverage of networks and lack of collaboration*

The original goals behind developing organisations and networks are perhaps now illustrated by the fact that cultural networks and organisations are fragmented, and often focused on specific issues and short-term goals. While networks such as the European Foundation for Arts and Heritage and ERICARTs, and the raft of different observatories listed in Section One offer valuable pools of information and knowledge, common information and data sources are rare, and information sources are often not known about by individuals and organisations who would benefit from this knowledge. Although there is a wide range of organisations operating at different geographical levels, very few organisations are truly pan-European in their geographical coverage. It is also clear from our surveys and interviews that a lack of funding and resources prevents organisations from participating as much as they would like within networks, and forming innovative partnerships. For the same reasons network to network communication is rare.

It was argued by some respondents to the survey that current networks are not always as inclusive as they might be. A common perception is that ‘if you are not in the circle you don’t have contacts to advise you on funds and opportunities’. It was evident both from the survey responses and interviews that current networks are not always visible and accessible to newcomers to the field in particular peripheral countries and the central and east European countries. There is also a perceived lack of involvement by minority cultures.

In addition, the sectoral coverage of these networks is not always optimal. Workshop participants pointed out that current networks do not necessarily bridge the gap between culture and other sectors (e.g. urban regeneration and sustainability, economic development) in relation to joint projects and access to funding. The current networks also do not necessarily reflect the considerable blurring which exists between cultural industry and other cultural actors.

Because networks have emerged as part of a bottom up process there is a great diversity of different types of organization and network. This has led to some associations and networks having difficulty in identifying 'parallel' organisations from other countries with which to cooperate. For example, the Estonian Artists Association, and Union of Bulgarian Artists do not have equivalents in many countries.

Finally, organisations and networks do not necessarily come together to address overarching issues for the cultural sector in Europe (largely because of time and resources) e.g. tackling barriers to mobility, developing shared databases of partners, etc.

#### *4.3. Sustainability of current networks*

Our research has also demonstrated that the current observatories, foundations and networks are not necessarily sustainable in the longer term in relation to funding and resources, and a lack of access to resources prevents organisations and individuals from cooperating as much as they would like.

It is clear from the research that organisations are to a large extent dependent on the availability of funding at the European level for transnational cultural co-operation, as national and regional authorities are frequently reluctant to fund such projects unless they directly focus on national and regional cultural identity. Similarly, several respondents to our surveys and interviews were not particularly enthusiastic about the idea of private sponsorship as this often leads to a focus on the use of celebrities and the need to raise the profile of the companies involved (although the important role of Foundations in this area should not be neglected however).

The funding available at a European level for cultural co-operation is at present, however, very limited. One of the interviewees estimated that only 0.1% of the EU budget goes directly to culture although 1-2% can be estimated to be spent indirectly through the European Social Fund (ESF) and European Regional Development Fund (ERDF). European funding is also not necessarily particularly well adapted to the needs of the cultural sector in relation to cultural co-operation per se. Within our research, Culture 2000 was frequently cited as being too professionally orientated, requiring too much long term planning, and offering possibilities too complex and distant for many cultural actors to grasp. Interviewees also pointed out that more training was needed on how to make applications for European funding. At present the majority of applications (81% according to one interviewee) fail leading to disillusionment and frustration. The availability of funds is not widely enough

known about – the networks are not always functioning particularly well in this respect, as competition for funds prevents people disseminating information. In addition, although ESF and ERDF were cited as potential funding sources, mainstream European funding programmes such as these were thought to be relatively rigid in their focus on economic and social cohesion and only a few possibilities are open for cultural organisations to get involved.

A lack of funding was cited across the board as a barrier to international co-operation both in terms of the surveys, interviews and workshop. In terms of the types of funding which are particularly lacking, it is clear from the survey results that resources for personnel are a significant issue - the administration involved in obtaining funding for international projects (on top of the limited availability of this funding) is seen as a barrier to participation. Co-operation itself is resource intensive particularly at the international level. In addition, respondents pointed out that funding for culture is currently often based on project outcomes which means that cultural actors cannot rely on long-term funding to carry out the core aspects of their activities (e.g. running networks, and exploring longer term strategies). The A budgetary line funding for networks was cited as an exception to this, however. Although limited, this funding had allowed at least 31 networks to work with more long-term security.

#### *4.4 Management of Information and knowledge*

A further key gap exists in relation to information and knowledge. Although it appears from our research that there is in fact a large amount of information circulated within the sector (particular since the advent of the Internet), access to targeted and good quality information, which will allow organisations and individuals to achieve their goals, is more scarce. For example, there is felt to be a lack of a common database covering potential partners for cultural co-operation, and clear updated information on funding and on mobility issues. In addition, data and indicators are being collected but are rarely comparable at the European level, and their policy relevance is not always ensured (in particular, this information is not always getting to the right policy makers). While Eurostat has for some years been looking at culture as an issue, a lack of consistent data collection at national level hampers the production of comparable European data sets. There is a need for new indicators for collection on the European scale, which will help policy makers to make informed decisions about the value and focus of future support for culture.

#### *4.5 Other identified gaps and barriers*

Although the above issues were the most frequently cited during our research, other gaps and barriers raised included the following:

### *Strategic approach*

- Cultural activity was felt by some to follow funding opportunities rather than reflecting longer-term strategic goals. There is no combined voice or coherent strategy in relation to lobbying for an increased priority for culture in many European projects, notably to strengthen the concept of European citizenship in the context of Enlargement, and as another factor in competitiveness, as promoted through the Lisbon agenda.

### *Professionalism*

- There was a concern among some respondents that there is a lack of ‘professionalisation’ in the cultural sector and a need to promote “arts management” skills.

### *Powers of the current networks*

- Current European networks are not necessarily able to intervene to maintain cultural heritage where there is not support for this at the national level or through international bodies such as UNESCO

### *Language*

- Language was cited as a barrier by some interviewees, but this view was expressed only in a limited way within our wider research. For example, although one Italian interviewee felt that the lack of knowledge of English among cultural stakeholders in Southern Europe hindered co-operation, only about 13% of those who responded to this question in the survey felt that language was a significant issue.

### *Lack of interest*

- Despite the fact that some interview respondents felt that there was room to encourage cultural actors to engage more in European projects, only between 5% and 7% of the organisations responding to this question in the survey found that lack of interest from staff and the public was preventing co-operation. A greater percentage (43%) felt that a lack of interest from funding bodies was significant.

## *4.6. Differences of opinion within the study responses*

While the themes above were expressed relatively frequently within our survey results, the culture sector in Europe (particularly when viewed across the 32 countries who may form the EU in the context of enlargement ) is complex and diverse and it is therefore unsurprising that views about the gaps and barriers in the field of cultural co-operation are often contradictory. In particular, different types of actors expressed different views on the priorities which needed to be addressed. This has interesting consequences in terms of the recommendations for this study. It is clear that in order to achieve buy-in to any proposed solutions, these

solutions will need to be targeted to where the different actors see the problems to lie, particularly in a period where competition for resources and support is high.

It could be argued that in Central and Eastern European countries there is a particular need for capacity building on participation in cross European partnerships, and also a relative lack of funding for cultural issues. Several survey respondents from Central and East European countries did emphasize the need for training in arts management skills and suggested that it would be useful to have comparative examples of successful co-operation projects in a range of fields. For example, a number of representatives from Bulgaria pointed out that they would like to engage more in cultural co-operation, but lacked the funds. In addition it was asserted that cultural actors within these countries have found it difficult to access the matched funding required to participate in programmes such as *Culture 2000*.

However, the feasibility study has also shown it to be very difficult to establish a clear pattern along these lines, as it is clear that the problems experienced in Central and East European countries are also experienced elsewhere. The majority of those contacted cited funding as a barrier. In addition, a representative from Denmark echoed the need for cultural actors to develop arts management skills and for there to be a wider 'professionalisation' of the sector. It was asserted that cultural co-operation projects should avoid a 'paternalistic' approach to countries in the East of Europe, but needed to involve all actors as equal partners.

Finally, it is obvious that there are differences in co-operation between the different cultural sectors. The audiovisual sector, for example, currently has established mechanisms, partly as a result of the European level observatory, and the fact that the sector is relatively uniform. In comparison, the visual arts was frequently cited as a sector where co-operation is less frequent. The importance of sectoral differences, should not, however, be over-emphasised as the cultural sector is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary and it is no longer as meaningful to make absolute distinctions between different categories of cultural activity.

#### 4.7 Conclusion

If we take the four potential goals for cultural co-operation in Europe highlighted at the start of this section, it appears that only the second and third goals (promotion of cultural collaboration between different organisations and places to encourage innovation, productivity and a fertile cultural field, and making better uses of existing resources, mobilising the use of assets and encouraging better use of funds, technology, information) are currently being addressed by current activities. Even these goals are supported in a piecemeal fashion and only as far as there are resources available. If European cultural co-operation is to address the more ambitious goals of building and maintaining a shared but diverse European culture and citizenship, and creating a common ground for agenda setting for the cultural sector, then new investment is needed to ensure that this takes place.



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## **5.0 PRIORITIES IN THE FIELD FOR GREATER SUPPORT AT THE EUROPEAN LEVEL**

Before proceeding to look at the opinions of those consulted on different options for greater support at the European level, it is important to summarise what were felt to be the key priorities for this support. Annex C includes a table illustrating the priorities for greater support envisaged at the European level through the surveys carried out by the study team. A summary of these priorities, and the wider priorities identified in the interviews and workshop is set out below:

### **i. Funding**

It is clear that increased funding is the priority envisaged by the most respondents. 93% felt that more direct funding of cultural co-operation would be useful. In relation to identifying where funding would be particularly useful, our initial questionnaire asked respondents to identify the need for more funding in three different categories – travel, personnel and events. Travel was the most frequently cited (80% of those who answered this question), with personnel receiving 72% and events 68%, and it was clear from the wider study that funding for personnel (particularly in relation to core funding) was a key issue.

### **ii. Knowledge management**

It is apparent that there is also a need for better knowledge management, though the knowledge which is ultimately sought varies considerably between different types of actor. It is interesting to note that different types of actors responded differently in terms of the priorities. For policy makers, the identified priorities relate almost entirely to information dissemination- interlinking existing networks, databases and websites, disseminating best-practice, establishing access to a database of cultural institutions, facilitating the exchange of information between institutions, providing information on relevant policy and regulations, and collating statistics.

In terms of the other respondents, the need to improve information dissemination was also highlighted, especially in terms of best practice examples, but there were a number of other common themes. In particular, respondents stressed the need for more co-operation and joint working between institutions, through personnel exchanges for example. The emphasis was as much on enlarging the "discourse" between institutions as on enlarging the flow of information and data per se. In the main survey there was also a call for more research into "new initiatives" for cultural co-operation, and a significant number of respondents called for more funding.

Within the priorities envisaged for European support, there was a clear emphasis in our research findings on practical information in relation to potential partners and funding, rather than information on policy, legislation and regulations, and the products of research. Significantly, 80% of respondents to the survey also identified a need for a database of institutions and organisations active in the field of cultural co-operation, and this was



supported by our interviews, where a significant number of respondents identified that there was a lack of knowledge about potential partners with whom to work.

**Table 5 Priorities in the field of information – Survey Responses**

a) Providing information on policy, legislation and regulations related to cultural co-operation	54%
b) Providing access to a database of institutions and organisations active in the field of cultural co-operation	80%
c) Collating statistics on cultural co-operation	61%

There is a lack of clarity in relation to copyright and intellectual property. Although only 7% of those initially surveyed thought that intellectual property rights issues were a barrier to co-operation, it appears that there is considerable uncertainty regarding cross-border legal frameworks and copyright legislation particularly in relation to the new challenges posed by the Internet.

Despite the diverse needs in this area, there are a number of common themes between the different types of information sought. In particular it is clear that it is knowledge management which is lacking rather than information and knowledge per se. Both types of respondent insisted that a focus was needed upon:

- Centralised information provision
- Quality control
- Funding for data collection

To elaborate on these in more detail:

i. Centralised information provision

In order to establish comparative data on a European scale, it is clear that there will need to be a centralised means of collecting and analysing this data. Policy makers and researchers are therefore keen for a centralised means of analysing and commissioning new data, which would operate in conjunction with Eurostat. In relation to more pragmatic information needs expressed by people on the ground, there were also desires expressed in relation to a centralised database which would:

- Remove current duplication of efforts in relation to databases
- Allow a ‘one stop shop’ approach to finding partners
- Acquire the visibility necessary to allow newcomers to the field to easily locate information.

ii. Quality control

A clear demand also arises across the board in relation to quality control. While it is obvious that data will need to be properly controlled to be comparable and accurate,

there were also a number of demands from representatives of cultural actors on the ground for “quality marking’ more practical information. For example, it was suggested that it would be useful to have information on the quality and reliability of partners so that organisations engaging in cross-cultural co-operation projects would know in advance that they could trust partners to deliver on their promises.

iii. Funding for data collection

A key point made in the workshop held on 3<sup>rd</sup> June was that the resources are not available on the ground to collect data and meet monitoring requirements. Cultural organisations are frequently asked for data, which is generally provided on a voluntary basis, causing a considerable drain on resources for cultural actors and administrators. As such, further requests for data from statistical authorities are unlikely to be welcomed by representatives of cultural organisations, unless the rationale for collecting the information is clearly explained and linked to potential future benefits, and/or remuneration is provided for the information provided.

## **6.0 THE WAY FORWARD: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF DIFFERENT OPTIONS**

The study team was asked to evaluate the relative advantages and disadvantages of three scenarios relating to support and analysis of cultural co-operation in Europe:

1. The creation of a new observatory of cultural co-operation;
2. Networking between existing structures fulfilling the function of an observatory at the European level and;
3. Taking no action to develop either of these options.

This chapter analyses the findings of the consultation phase of the study in relation to the views of stakeholders on the advantages and disadvantages of these three scenarios. As outlined in the methodological chapter, representatives of cultural institutions and associations, policy-making bodies and organisations that already conduct some of the roles of an observatory were explicitly asked to consider the relative advantages and disadvantages of the three options set out above, through a survey, in-depth interviews and a workshop.

The analysis that follows is based on the results of the survey, interviews and workshop. In interpreting the results, it is important to bear in mind that neither the structure and objectives of a “new observatory of cultural co-operation”, nor the form that networking of existing organisations might take were defined beforehand. As such, participants were asked to make judgments on the basis of their own conception of what each of the three options implied.

### *6.1 Overall Preferences*

All respondents to the survey and all interviewees were asked which of the three options concerning the creation of a European Observatory of Cultural Co-operation they favoured. The results from the survey and interviews show:

- majority support for increased networking,
- moderate support for the creation of a new observatory and
- a very clear rejection of the “no action scenario” among those consulted.

A minority of those asked indicated a preference for a combination of a new observatory and increased networking of existing organisations.

The breakdown of results from the 133 questionnaires received is shown in Table 6 below. The figures in the second column represent the totals including the views of four individuals who were interviewed, but who did not complete a survey questionnaire<sup>17</sup>:

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<sup>17</sup> All except four of the thirty people interviewed had previously completed a survey questionnaire.

**Table 6: Views on the Three Options**

	Survey Results	Including Interviewees
1 Set up a new European observatory of cultural co-operation	37	38
2 Support increased networking between organisations which currently fulfil the role of an observatory at European level	78	80
Explicit support for both a new observatory and increased networking	16	16
3 Take no action	2	3
Total	133	137

After indicating their general preference, all participants in the survey and interviews were asked to provide their views on the relative advantages and disadvantages of the three hypothetical scenarios. This was also a key subject of debate during the workshop. The rest of this chapter analyses in turn the positive and negative aspects of each option, as expressed by respondents.

## 6.2 *The No Action Scenario*

The surveys, interviews and workshop demonstrated an overwhelming rejection of the ‘no action’ scenario. A large majority of those consulted saw no advantages in taking no action. They also highlighted that there are numerous difficulties faced by organisations and individuals in the field of cultural co-operation that would remain un-addressed if no action were taken.

Furthermore, several of those consulted felt that taking no action would represent a step backwards in relation to the current situation in Europe. During the workshop, in particular, participants argued forcefully that although “take no action” may imply maintenance of the *status quo*, action is necessary just to maintain the present situation in the field of cultural co-operation, let alone to improve it.

Participants in the consultation felt that action is necessary for a range of fundamental and practical reasons. In broad terms, additional effort in the field of cultural co-operation was felt necessary for the following reasons:

- to fund and preserve European cultural heritage and cultural and linguistic diversity, perceived by some to be under threat in the context of globalisation and consistent under-funding of arts and culture;

- ❑ to ensure our knowledge of and support for cultural co-operation is regularly updated to take account of evolution in the cultural sector, particularly as a result of new technology and media; and
- ❑ to counteract a widespread assumption that ‘culture will always survive’, which is used as a justification for a lack of investment.

On a more practical level, many of the issues discussed in the previous chapter on current gaps and barriers in the field of cultural co-operation were highlighted as justifications for action. It was suggested that there was possible room for improvement across the board. A view was expressed that the sector was currently under-funded, localised and fragmented. However it was asserted that it is important to break the situation down into various different issues and needs as these will have different potential solutions.

- ❑ There are funding gaps, particularly in relation to trans-national and trans-regional activities, as these are frequently not funded at the national and regional level.
- ❑ Cultural co-operation is not evenly distributed in Europe: some countries provide greater facilities for co-operation than others.
- ❑ Communities of practice operate in different cultural fields in Europe and have a great deal of tacit professional knowledge. This knowledge needs to be shared more widely.
- ❑ Europe is not functioning as a ‘marketplace’ for cultural activity, partly because of fiscal and legal issues, which hinder the mobility of artists.

Despite, these points, a small minority of those consulted, all policy makers, highlighted advantages of the no action scenario. These nearly all mirror the perceived disadvantages of the other two scenarios, which we analyse below, and mostly involve the minimisation of risks and costs which are associated with taking action of some kind. In particular, taking no action is seen as removing the risk of failure and unmet expectations and minimises the potential for wasting scarce financial resources on “unnecessary bureaucracy”.

A positive advantage of the no action scenario highlighted by one interviewee is the possibility of redirecting money saved for existing cultural organisations and networks by not launching a new observatory. The extent to which this suggestion differs fundamentally from others made by advocates of increased networking of existing organisations is perhaps open to debate.

### *6.3 Creating a New Observatory of Cultural Co-operation*

The consultation phase of the study revealed moderate support for the creation of a new observatory of cultural co-operation. Support for the creation of a new observatory comes from organisations of all types (cultural stakeholders, existing observatories and policy makers) and from many parts of Europe. In particular, there is no particular geographical distribution of support for the creation of an observatory, with advocates coming from the EU-15 and candidate countries, from Northern and Southern Europe.

## ***Advantages***

Those that support the establishment of a new observatory most commonly stressed three core advantages of such a course of action<sup>18</sup>:

1. It would provide a single and highly visible point of reference in a complex field;
2. It would have a pan-European focus and be representative of the enlarged EU;
3. It would provide a new direction and impetus for cultural co-operation.

### *A visible point of reference*

The creation of an observatory is seen by many of its advocates as a means to enhance the profile of the cultural sector and provide a certain visibility that is lacking at present. Supporters of a European level observatory cite a number of important benefits of such a body in this respect.

Firstly, an observatory could act as a reference point for information and a repository of knowledge in the field of cultural co-operation. The observatory could address a current fragmentation of information sources and fill gaps where there is currently a lack of systematic collection and dissemination of information. Creating a single information point for information relevant to cultural co-operation would not only enhance the accessibility of this information, but could also reduce wasteful duplication of effort. As one interviewee put it “Right now there are hundreds of organisations that I’ve never heard of, doing lots of bits of work”. In general terms, policy makers and researchers expressed a need for more statistics and studies, whereas other stakeholders in the cultural field highlighted the need for more practical information.

An observatory could also provide coordination in a fragmented sector. Even a small central organisation could act as focal contact point for a range of actors in the cultural co-operation field. One Contact Cultural Point (CCP) representative, for example, felt that an observatory would improve the coordination between the CCPs, while a range of organisations consulted (including stakeholders and policy makers) expressed the view that such a body could improve links and understanding among existing national and local organisations and between different cultural sectors, which are currently rather insular (between theatre and visual arts, for example).

Several respondents to the survey and interviewees also thought that a European cultural co-operation observatory would be able to improve the links and synergies between the cultural sector (viewed as a whole) and other fields of endeavour, including economic development bodies, businesses, the trade unions and the information technology sector. This need for increased “cross-sectoral” collaboration was also echoed by supporters of increased networking, one of whom in particular stressed the importance of improving links at an EU institutional level between cultural policy and regional and research policy.

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<sup>18</sup> These were the most commonly cited advantages in the survey responses and the interviews.

### *Inclusiveness and Impartiality*

A significant number of the survey respondents and interviewees that support a new observatory stress the need for this body to be impartial and inclusive, in terms of sectors and, more particularly, geographical regions. Organisations from a number of more peripheral areas of Europe, notably in the East, felt that a new organisation could help them to access funds and knowledge more effectively. It is felt by several organisations that a European level body would be better placed to take into account the needs of small as well as large countries than the current range of organisations with embedded national interests.

### *New impetus*

Supporters of a new observatory also point out that this institution has the potential to provide a new dynamism in the cultural sector. A body with a high level of professionalism would have the potential to take a lead in promoting cultural co-operation more effectively than current networks and institutions, which suffer not only from a lack of funding, but also have difficulties in retaining professional staff.

One interviewee from a non-EU country, felt that an observatory at a European level would be able to counteract what was described as "old fashioned nationalism" in the field of cultural co-operation and produce "new dynamism for a new generation".

### *Disadvantages*

A significant number of disadvantages to creating a new observatory were identified by participants in the consultation phase of the study. Supporters of networking (the second option put forward in the survey questionnaire) were the most vocal in highlighting the disadvantages of creating a new observatory. Indeed, they are often more insistent on these points than in putting forward the advantages of their preferred networking solution. This said, even advocates of a new observatory identified several potential pitfalls associated with the creation of such a body, often echoing those forwarded by opponents of such a project.

In summary, the most widely cited disadvantages of the observatory option were as follows<sup>19</sup>:

1. It would be an unjustifiable cost in a sector with limited resources;
2. It would be bureaucratic and detached from cultural players on the ground;
3. It would simply duplicate activities currently conducted by other actors in the field;
4. It would be difficult to structure, organise and manage in such a complex field, with such a range of national, regional and sectoral interests;
5. It would lack credibility and independence.

### *Cost Effectiveness and Bureaucracy*

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<sup>19</sup> These factors are listed broadly in order of the frequency with which they were cited by survey and interviewee respondents.



Excessive cost and the bureaucracy were by far the most commonly mentioned concerns about the establishment of a European Observatory of Cultural Co-operation, in the survey results, interviews and workshop.

It was widely felt that the cost of creating a new institution for an observatory, even one employing relatively few staff, would represent an unjustifiable cost. Views on this subject appear to be very strongly conditioned by the knowledge that the cultural sector in general lacks funds and that continued European funding for existing organisations faces an uncertain future. Members of existing networks were particularly vocal in expressing their concerns about the phasing out of budget line A3042 of the General Community budget and, in several cases explicitly expressed their fear that resources would in future be diverted to a potential observatory. It was widely felt by opponents of a new observatory that it would be more cost effective to spend money on assisting existing organisations, rather than investing in the costly exercise of establishing and running a new institution.

Closely related to these concerns about cost effectiveness, are widespread concerns about creating what is perceived to be an unmanageable and unwieldy bureaucratic institution. Leaving aside the difficulties of designing and managing a single body to cover such a wide-ranging field (examined below), many of those questioned demonstrated a high level of scepticism about the creation of a “yet another” bureaucratic international institution. Apart from the fact that such organisations tend to develop their own bureaucratic dynamic, many stakeholders and policy makers alike argued that an observatory “imposed from above” would be an inappropriate and inflexible solution in the cultural sector, which relies on grass roots developments and innovation.

#### *Duplication of existing roles*

Opponents of a new observatory also argued that there was a real risk that a new organisation would duplicate roles already performed by existing organisations and potentially divert money from these. Those making this argument generally cited existing cultural research and documentation organisations (see typology in Chapter 3 of this report), such as the *European Cultural Foundation*, *EricArts* and *CultureLink*. Other individuals stressed the role of cultural networks in facilitating exchange and co-operation and questioned how a new institution would be able to do this as effectively. This line of argument in several cases led back to the suggestion highlighted above, that resources would be better directed into existing organisations.

During the workshop, some participants also commented that the observatory seemed to be a means through which the European Commission wanted to achieve competitiveness and cohesion in Europe rather than arising from any real needs within the sector.

#### *Problems of organisation and credibility*

On a very practical level, the difficulty of establishing a body to represent such a wide range of cultural sectors in so many countries, while retaining a commitment to inclusiveness and

accountability was seen as unfeasible by many of those approached during the study. Indeed, one rather sceptical interviewee remarked that an observatory would become “just another mind-blowing European organisation”. The issue of the time required to establish a potential observatory was also mentioned by several opponents of this option. These individuals argue that an observatory would take too much time to establish itself, would be too hard to manage and was likely to be unsuccessful

Linked to this concern, the problems of gaining political acceptance and legitimacy for a new observatory were commonly stressed. As noted, the range of interests to be represented would not only pose a problem for institutional architects, but be a constant source of contention, were an observatory to be established. Examples of existing observatory-type bodies or attempts to form them are cited as cautionary examples. Several respondents felt that existing bodies were dominated by national preoccupations and prone to power struggles over leadership, linguistic preference and control.

#### *6.4 Networking of Existing Organisations*

A majority of those participating in the consultation phase of the study favoured a solution based on networking of organisations that already fulfil some of the roles of an observatory of cultural co-operation. Support for this option was particularly strong among organisations identified as types of cultural observatory in the first phase of the study.

##### ***Advantages***

Proponents of a networking solution to support cultural co-operation often frame their arguments in terms of the advantages of this approach over the creation of a new institution. The main advantages cited during the consultation were as follows:

1. Such an approach would exploit existing resources;
2. It would increase synergies between existing organisations and thus promote co-operation and exchange;
3. It would be easier to involve grass roots organisations and avoid the danger of excessive bureaucracy associated with the creation of a new institution;
4. It would be more cost effective.

##### *Exploitation of existing resources*

Many of those approached through the consultation, and not only those supporting increased networking, made reference to the large number of organisations in the cultural co-operation sector in Europe. This reflects the range of players identified in the first phase of the feasibility study and outlined in Chapter 3 of this report. The organisations most frequently cited were, firstly, umbrella or thematic cultural networks (*CIRCLE, EFAH, Informal European Theatre Meeting*) and, secondly, organisations focused on cultural research and documentation (*ERICarts, Budapest Observatory, Boekman Foundation, Council of*

*Europe*<sup>20</sup>). The first category is generally seen as a means to promote practical cultural co-operation and exchange, the second as a source of research and analysis. It is noteworthy that the majority of respondents did not differentiate between research in the field of cultural policy and in the specific area of “cultural co-operation”.

Many survey respondents, interviewees and workshop participants expressed the view that these “observatory-type” organisations, when viewed collectively, already have much of the expertise and knowledge necessary to perform the roles of a European observatory of cultural co-operation. Furthermore, the diversity and complexity of the cultural sector necessitates a reliance on a range of organisations with sector-specific knowledge, rather than a single institution that could never feasibly encompass the range of interests and activities involved.

It was acknowledged by many of those in favour of the networking option, that the current field of organisations would need some form of structured core to coordinate information transfer, in particular (which is not necessarily the same as coordinating the organisations and networks themselves). One policy maker interviewed favoured a networking solution, but felt that existing cultural networks should be restructured, as some are currently unnecessary. The large number of organisations present in the field would certainly present a challenge for any network coordinator, an issue often highlighted by those consulted as a disadvantage of this scenario (see below). Despite this, the diversity and range of organisations does have other advantages.

### *Representation and Synergies*

The current range of organisations active in the field of cultural co-operation have established links with the cultural community in Europe that a new observatory, established from new, would lack. Moreover, the large number of thematic and umbrella networks already operational in different cultural sectors have the intrinsic advantage of being ‘bottom-up’ organisations, composed of a wide variety of actors with a good understanding of what is happening ‘on the ground’. Several interviewees, including representatives of Cultural Contact Points and organisations in Eastern and Central Europe, highlighted the vital importance of access to local knowledge in the cultural field.

Many respondents to the survey cited increased synergies and coordination as a benefit of the networking solution<sup>21</sup>. Several respondents stressed that networking would be more inclusive in that it would allow a greater role for smaller organisations, while several respondents from the Accession countries thought that this scenario would make it easier to integrate representation from Eastern and Central Europe. One Survey respondent wrote that “Networks of expertise, institutions and associations would bundle energies and strengthen the third sector”, but also stressed that “help would be required for sector actors in their efforts to professionalise their work”.

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<sup>20</sup> The Council of Europe’s work focuses on cultural policy, as opposed to the more specific field of cultural co-operation, so is not included in our assessment of current observatories of cultural co-operation.

<sup>21</sup> Advantages along these lines were cited by 20 survey respondents

### *Cost Effectiveness*

A significant proportion of those advocating the networking of existing institutions mentioned the cost effectiveness of this scenario over the creation of a new observatory. Making use of existing resources is seen by many participants in the consultation as a way both to strengthen these organisations, while avoiding the need to spend (or “waste”) money on creating a new institution.

### *Disadvantages*

The main disadvantages of the networking solution, highlighted by several of its proponents as well as those in favour of an observatory, often mirror the advantages of creating a new observatory advanced by the supporters of this option, namely:

1. Lack of a central focal point;
2. Problems of institutional design;
3. Risks of partiality and unequal geographical coverage.

### *Lack of Focus and Institutional Design*

Although many of the advocates of the networking scenario focused on the advantages of this solution in terms of exploitation of existing expertise, inclusiveness and cost, the difficulties of bringing together and managing such a wide range of disparate organisations was often acknowledged. Proponents of the creation of a new observatory, in particular, felt it would not be possible to unite the cultural co-operation field effectively without a new institution and that the networking option would not provide a visible point of reference in the same way as an observatory.

A significant number of those consulted felt that some form of institutional core would be necessary, even if the network scenario were adopted (9 survey respondents explicitly indicated the need for a both some form of new observatory and a network of existing organisations). This would go some way to addressing the criticism relating to visibility.

Even taking into account this proposal, three essential organisational or structural issues emerged from the consultation. Firstly, there is the fundamental question of whether it is possible or desirable to bring together organisations from all cultural sectors. It is not clear whether there is sufficient motivation for organisations from different sectors to work together, the basic question being “what would be the glue that would hold the different sectors together?” Workshop participants, in particular, were sceptical about whether a network grouping all relevant organisations in the field would be viable and even in relation to a more modest suggestion for a “network of networks”, stressed that it would only work if networks saw that participation would further their own objectives.

The second problem to emerge is linked to this last point. It was felt by several participants in the consultation that existing networks have their own corporatist interests and would be unwilling to cooperate effectively together. This problem is aggravated by the scarcity of

resources for cultural projects, which makes it necessary for networks to compete with each other. This point of view should, however, be contrasted with stated preference of a majority of existing “observatory-like” organisations (networks and research organisations) for the networking scenario.

Finally, the lack of guaranteed funding for networks (and to a slightly lesser extent institutions) and the *ad hoc* basis on which many of them operate means that they do not necessarily have the professional resources to contribute effectively to a network. Although the overall picture emerging from the study is one of a considerable body of expertise and experience in the field of cultural co-operation, doubts were raised by some individuals regarding the professional and management capabilities of network participants.

#### *Risk of exclusiveness*

In contrast to a majority of supporters of the networking solution who stressed the inclusiveness of networking, a significant minority of participants in the consultation (both supporters of an observatory and supporters of networking) highlighted the risk of a networking solution leading to less comprehensive geographical coverage. There is a particular risk that organisations in more peripheral countries with lower levels of resources at their disposal will be unable to participate effectively in networks and that, as a result, their views and contributions will not be taken into account.

## **7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.**

### **7.1 Introduction**

After assessing the current situation in relation to cultural co-operation in Europe, identifying barriers and gaps in relation to cultural co-operation and bringing together views on the different options, ECOTEC Research & Consulting has arrived at a series of conclusions in relation to potential ways forward following this Feasibility Study. This section of the report analyses the findings of the consultation process, before setting out a series of recommendations for potential new support at the European level. The study team also assesses whether any of these modes of support could be provided from within existing organisations and structures in Europe.

### **7.2 Summary of findings**

To summarise, it is apparent from our research that :

- ❑ There is frustration within the cultural sector by all parties as to the lack of European support, and in particular funding, for cultural co-operation;
- ❑ There are clear concerns that any new interventions at the European level will take resources away from existing organisations and networks – these are leading to conservatism within the sector in relation to change;
- ❑ Competing and contradictory demands exist within the sector which are unlikely to be solved by any single solution;
- ❑ There is considerable resistance among a significant percentage of cultural stakeholders as to the idea of an ‘observatory’. There were clearly a series of preconceptions as to what an observatory might involve in relation to :
  - a. A certain level of bureaucracy
  - b. Being resource intensive
  - c. Duplication of existing effort
- ❑ However amongst certain participants in the consultation phase of the study, particularly policy makers and researchers, there is clearer support, particularly in relation to an observatory which would allow for comparative analysis and monitoring to assist the long term sustainability of cultural co-operation in Europe.
- ❑ The field is highly complex and already ‘network-rich’. Any intervention therefore needs to take this into account and avoid either over-simplification or further complication of a complicated field

- ❑ There are, however, high levels of demand at different levels for greater knowledge management (although the demand for knowledge varies by type of actor) .

The study has examined the different options set out in the Terms of Reference developed by the Commission in respect of:

1. Taking no action
2. Setting up a new European cultural co-operation observatory
3. Supporting increased networking between organisations which currently fulfil the role of an observatory at European level

In relation to the first option ('taking no action'), it is clear from our research that the current situation is unsustainable without increased intervention. This is because:

- ❑ current observatories and networks are not providing sufficient information and knowledge which is relevant or accessible at the European level ;
- ❑ the present situation is not necessarily sustainable in the longer term, particularly because current networks and observatories lack funding; and
- ❑ the overall European context is changing all the time - the sector needs investment just for the current situation to be maintained.

In relation to the second and third options, it is clear that, taken on its own, each option poses difficulties, as follows:

#### *Option 1*

- ❑ Creating a new observatory will be welcomed by some, particularly policy makers and researchers interested in greater knowledge on cultural co-operation at the European level.
- ❑ However a new observatory was not thought to be the best means of supporting other cultural actors and stakeholders due to concerns over levels of centralisation and bureaucracy. In the context of a lack of resources in the sector as whole, there would be limited commitment to such an institution from a significant proportion of the sector.

#### *Option 2*

- ❑ Supporting greater networking was given broad support, because it would maximise the expertise of existing cultural actors, support the current 'bottom up' system, and avoid duplication.
- ❑ However it is difficult to envisage how greater networking could occur without some portal, or central point for the exchange of information on for example potential partners, different networks, funding streams and relevant issues.



### 7.3 Analysis of the Options

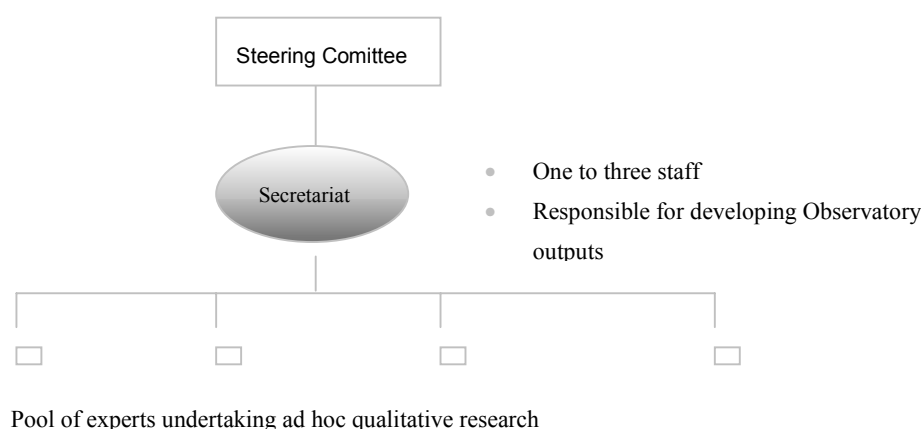
The study team has analysed the findings of the consultation process in more detail in the light of a further investigation into the likely costs of the different options proposed and our knowledge of existing services which might, with some development, fill the gaps and tackle barriers identified within the study.

#### *Option 1 : Creating a new European observatory for cultural co-operation*

As shown above, there is, at best, mixed support for the creation of a European Observatory of Cultural Co-operation. Even those supporting the establishment of an observatory recognised the likely costs and difficulties of organising such a body for such a diverse sector. An obvious question is whether such fears are justified in the light of the other European Observatories currently operating in other fields.

The views of those consulted were clearly based on perceptions and assumptions about the resources required, rather than any presentation of exact costs. However, it could be expected, on the basis of an analysis of other European observatories, that an observatory for cultural co-operation would be relatively resource intensive. The study team has looked at a series of existing observatories in the field, including the Employment Observatory, the European Audiovisual Observatory and the European Spatial Planning Observation Network and has identified the following likely components and costs of such a new institution :

#### Box 4: Generalised observatory model based on existing institutions in other areas



As can be seen from the above model, it is anticipated that the Observatory could operate based on three components:

- Steering Committee : European Commission and a number of organisations representing cultural stakeholders

- A support structure responsible for the implementation of the functions of the observatory with 1-3 staff. This ‘Secretariat’ would be responsible for: disseminating information including presentation of information on a website and through relevant periodic publications ; ensuring analysis and recommendations are circulated and available to relevant policy makers at the European, national and regional levels ; commissioning qualitative research to sub-contractors ; and in general liaising with institutions and stakeholders to address specific information needs.
  
- A pool of experts co-operating with the Observatory to undertake broader qualitative research on specific themes as necessary. These experts would be selected on a competitive basis and themes can entail research on issues of practical issues such as identifying barriers to cultural co-operation in different countries.

It is evident from our analysis that the cost of existing observatories varies in relation to the roles they wish to perform and the instruments they wish to utilise. For example, the European Audiovisual Observatory works solely in the audiovisual sector, while the European Employment Observatory is gradually moving away from paper-based publications to place more emphasis on dissemination of information regarding the European Employment Strategy through the internet. It is likely that an observatory set up to fill the needs of all the cultural sectors could be relatively high if it sought to fulfil too many diverse objectives.

Although it is difficult to generalise, it is considered likely that establishing and running a new observatory for cultural co-operation would cost in the region of €1 million to €2 million per year, depending on the roles and responsibilities allocated to it (e.g. depending on the level of research it will be supporting, on the volume of publications it will be producing, the dynamism of its website, the languages of operation etc.). This estimated cost has been worked up on the basis of the following elements<sup>22</sup>:

- Staff costs which will vary according to the level of experience of the selected staff, the contractual arrangements and the social security costs prevailing in different countries. Staff costs for one Category I Staff (15+ years professional experience) to oversee operations and two persons Category III Staff (5+ years professional experience) for administrative day-to-day tasks is in the region of Euro 130,000 per annum
  
- Overhead costs : including rental of office space, telecommunications costs, data processing equipment, software and hardware for web-design etc. at Euro 50,000 per annum
  
- Translation costs. These will vary depending on how many languages the portal will be available in.

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<sup>22</sup> The cost of these elements is adjusted to include a margin for likely additional costs associated with establishing and running the observatory which would emerge from a more detailed budgetary calculation.

- A budget for commissioning ad hoc comparative research. This will be a function of the breadth of research (e.g. how many countries will be covered) and the depth of the research topics. If we assume that one expert in each of 30 countries, has 15 days to produce a research paper examining a common theme in their country, every 6 months this would give a total budget for research Euro 210,000 every six months. Some staff costs would then be required for quality controlling the outputs of the research.
  
- Travel costs for meetings with the Commission and other stakeholders and travel costs for meetings for research purposes. Again, these will vary depending on how ambitious the research and consultation plans will be.

### *Option 2 : Greater networking of existing organisations*

The option of ‘greater networking’ did receive much greater support amongst those consulted for this Feasibility Study. However, it was not clearly envisaged how this should be taken forward. It is important to analyse what would actually be required to increase networking in practice. A further issue is whether greater networking would fill all of the current gaps and barriers existing within the sector.

“Greater networking of existing organisations” was the option favoured by 59% of survey respondents and was widely perceived by participants in the consultation as a means to maximise the expertise of existing cultural actors, support the current ‘bottom up’ system, and avoid duplication of activities. However, there was a lack of agreement on the exact mechanism for increasing support in this area, apart from the importance of increasing, or at least continuing, funding in this area. There was a lack of support for a new network incorporating all cultural sectors because cross-sectoral contact between individual institutions was not perceived to be a useful tool on a day to day basis. Also, while the idea of ‘network of networks’ was discussed more positively, it was not foreseen how as a practical option. The large number of organisations and networks present in the field would certainly present a challenge in this respect.

It can be argued that organisations currently active in the field of cultural co-operation would benefit from central mechanisms to coordinate increased networking and shared information resources on common issues. One way to address this need would be a primarily web-based “portal” for cultural co-operation. Indeed, during the workshop discussion, the idea of such a common ‘portal’ was given much greater support than that of an ‘observatory’. It is clear that in the context of the complex and diverse field that exists, a common portal would be a useful mechanism for ensuring common access to resources, and the exchange of information relevant to the whole of the cultural sector (across geographical and sectoral boundaries). Such exchange of practical information would not only support current networks, but develop the environment necessary to encourage more spontaneous co-operation projects by individual artists and organisations in the future.

It is clear that “greater networking” will not address all the gaps and barriers which have emerged in the course of the study. Some of the issues raised, such as the need for greater

professionalisation of the sector, and greater joint working between cultural and non-cultural actors, require action beyond the specific field of cultural co-operation, making it difficult to make firm recommendations within the scope for this report. In general terms, greater exchange between the cultural and non-cultural sectors on the policy level implies close co-operation between the cultural field and stakeholders in other policy domains. In a European context, it could be argued that the role of culture in mainstream European funding areas should be considered to a greater extent and promoted and publicised more actively. In relation to professionalisation issues, greater financial support for training could be an option, but again this is felt to be outside the scope of the study.

However, the need for the greater development and collection of comparative statistics to support those involved in policy development and programme implementation, requires greater consideration. While support for greater networking could fulfil some of the more pragmatic tasks referred to in the Terms of Reference (such as the promotion of cultural co-operation, exchange of information and compiling inventories of bodies active in the cultural field), this would not necessarily contribute greatly to the “observation, follow-up, analysis and description of different forms of cultural co-operation in Europe”. While research and the collation of statistics was not seen as a priority by many of those surveyed during the consultation phase of the study, it is clear that this is a concern amongst a number of policy makers, particularly at the European level.

The increased availability of harmonised data on the cultural sector at a European level would provide a valuable input into policy development in the cultural field and facilitate many of the other activities originally suggested for a potential observatory of cultural co-operation (such as the identification of measures to strengthen cultural co-operation in Europe). In the context of enlargement and the Lisbon agenda on competitiveness, improved data on the scale and impact of cultural activities in the wider Europe would be a clear advantage.

#### **7.4 Recommendations**

In the light of the findings of this Feasibility Study, and in particular the likely costs associated with developing an observatory and the lack of popular support in the field, we would not recommend establishing a new European Observatory for Cultural Co-operation. The current lack of resources available for cultural co-operation and networking, means that an observatory would be an unpopular use of resources, and is likely to be seen as a ‘top down’ intervention from the European Commission.

However, there are a series of gaps and barriers which could be addressed through greater European support. On the basis of our consultation and analysis, we would recommend that the following interventions are likely to be supported within the field and would provide cost-effective solutions to the needs identified:

1. Continued support for current networks and a potential review of funding for these networks;
2. The establishment of a coordination mechanism for information circulation within the field – for example, a new or enhanced cultural portal;

### 3. Additional impetus in the area of cultural statistics development and collection.

In the remainder of this report, we expand on these recommendations, taking into account the costs and benefits of different mechanisms for delivering increased support in these areas.

#### *7.4.1 Continued support for current networks and potential review of funding to these networks*

It was clearly felt by many of those consulted that current European support for networking between organisations should at least be continued and preferably increased. Cultural networks were perceived to be performing a useful role and should be assisted to remain viable. While it is outside the scope of this Feasibility Study to make recommendations regarding the exact nature of continued funding for networks, it is clear that this is a priority for many within the sector. Furthermore, the EU institutions would be wise to capitalise on the wealth of expertise and co-operation which has developed through bottom-up mechanisms in the past, rather than attempt to set up new institutions and mechanisms which would not necessarily be either popular or effective.

#### *7.4.2 The establishment of a coordination mechanism for information circulation within the field*

On the basis of our findings, we would recommend that a web-based cultural co-operation portal could provide a number of elements that are currently felt to be missing from the field of European cultural co-operation. Such a portal could perform a series of functions, including providing access to a shared partner database, presenting useful information relevant to all the culture sectors, and sending funding news. The initial aim of a portal would be to provide a central reference point for cultural co-operation. However, limiting the remit of this site to a simple information role would be a missed opportunity, as it could also be used to promote interaction between stakeholders and projects in the field.

This dual role would have direct implications for the design of the portal. The site could include not only background information which, while useful, would only be referred to for very specific queries, but also take a central role in the daily workings of cultural co-operation. To do so, it would need to cover current events, in addition to regulatory and contact information, and offer a series of interactive features designed to build an active user community. These features could include mailing lists, bulletin boards, a responsive and proactive Question and Answer service, a news service presenting recent or ongoing projects and so forth. These features would stimulate additional return visits, increase the visibility of the service and promote an active exchange of information.

#### *1) Existing Resources in the Field*

It is clear that a new cultural co-operation portal would not be operating in a vacuum. There are a series of interventions in this area which already exist at the European level including:

- ❑ The European Culture Portal (within the Europa Server at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/culture/index_en.htm));
- ❑ A database of partners located on the website of the Spanish Cultural Contact Point (<http://agora.mcu.es/pcc/ingles/indice.asp>);
- ❑ A database of Central and Eastern European cultural organizations developed by the Austrian Cultural Contact Point <http://www.cee-culture.info/default.asp>
- ❑ A website with advice and a series of links on mobility issues, particularly aimed at organisations and individuals involved in the performing arts (<http://www.on-the-move.org/>) set up by IETM – the Informal European Theatre Meeting;
- ❑ The Council of Europe website ([http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural\\_Co-operation/culture/](http://www.coe.int/T/E/Cultural_Co-operation/culture/))

The European Culture Portal (ECP) provides a series of relevant services in this area. For example, it provides information on European policy and funding opportunities available across the cultural sectors (including architecture, visual arts, cinema, dance, education in the arts, books, music, cultural heritage and theatre), links to the sites of Culture Ministries and national culture portals and relevant websites in the EU Member States and Associate Countries.

However, the current service provided by the portal has a number of potential disadvantages. The ECP is clearly focused on Community action and legislation in the area of European culture, rather than providing the possibility for a more ‘bottom up’ exchange of information. There is also no database of potential partners available at present, although one is currently being developed for participants in the Culture 2000 Programme. The ECP does not have specific material on mobility issues or other practical matters, such as legal and fiscal questions and there are currently no clearly signposted links relating to these subjects. The portal is also based within the Europa service and is therefore strongly associated with the European Institutions and potentially difficult to locate within the EU site.

A database of potential partners in European funding bids is currently available on the Spanish Cultural Contact Point (<http://agora.mcu.es/pcc/ingles/indice.asp>). This Partner Search Database is an initiative of the European Network of Cultural Contact Points, co-funded by the European Commission to assist arts and cultural organisations in European countries to access funding from the Culture 2000 Programme. This database is free of charge and its use is voluntary. The site has the advantage of offering information on previous participation by partners in different co-operation activities. However, because the database is based on the Spanish Cultural Contact Point, it is not clearly accessible to a wider public (the main signposting towards this site appears to occur through other national contact points, although from our research on, for example, the UK cultural contact point site, this route was not clearly mentioned). The site also only offers the opportunity to search for partners in the context of particular European funding bids – i.e. only organisations who have previously expressed an interest in leading or participating in such bids appear to be listed.

The Austrian Cultural Contact point has developed a database of Central and Eastern European cultural institutions, including cultural associations, organizations, foundations, institutional projects, institutes, centres, networks, unions etc. of the CSEE countries. The



project was begun in March 2001 and since April 2002 has been providing a free service, accessible online. Currently, 700 institutions and 162 projects are listed. This is clearly a useful resource for Central and Eastern European countries.

A website exists on mobility issues at the European level: the 'On the Move' Website, hosted by IETM (the Informal European Theatre Meeting). The mobility portal, part-funded by a Community grant, is currently under revision and visitors are invited to submit their feedback on what could be improved. The portal will be re-launched in December 2003. This service clearly has some very useful information and links in relation to mobility issues. The site also includes links to a number of relevant databases. However this site is aimed specifically at the performing arts sector.

Finally, the Council of Europe website holds mainly information on cultural policies and the projects supported by the Council of Europe. Also included are a large number of publications on various aspects of 'Culture and Communications', including comparative studies on cultural policies, cultural development, cultural heritage and so forth. The Council of Europe website is an information resource, but is not interactive, and holds no information on potential interlocutors or partners in other countries.

## *2) Technical factors associated with the establishment of the portal*

While the current European Culture Portal is a valuable information resource, it is not designed to reflect frequent updating or sustain an active online community. In order to do this, the homepage would have to be changed in line with the evolving remit (for example, by including a news feature, event announcements, invitations to subscribe or interact), and the corresponding main navigation and page templates would have to be adjusted (inclusion of a news section, completing the move of the events section from the page footer to the main navigation, etc). As the logical structure of the site would change as part of the process, a mapping exercise would have to attribute the pages within the new structure. The implication is that, even if the current technical set-up were to allow it, the migration to the new template could not be done automatically but would require some level of manual, and thus time-consuming, intervention. In addition to this consideration, the objectives of the current site and the prospective co-operation portal do not coincide in all points.

A more detailed comparison of the different options, including a comparison based on cost, is set out in point 3 below. A set of assumptions for the production of the cultural co-operation portal have been stipulated below, as a basis for comparison. These assumptions should however be validated on the basis of a technical and functional analysis which may affect the underlying options and thus the indicative budget.

We are working on the assumption that existing sites and databases relevant to the portal, such as the partners databases on the Spanish and Austrian Cultural Contact Point, and On-the-Move.org, will be included as external links and maintain their autonomy. While this approach may imply a fragmented presentation of some of the information, it will safeguard the commitment of existing initiatives, avoid duplication, and free resources for the actual objective of providing a focal point for the various national and sector initiatives,



rather than replacing them. It must also be stressed that due to the technical diversity of the various database set-ups, integrating them into a single site is likely to be an expensive endeavour, both in terms of initial set-up and maintenance. Validating the contents, which in the case of technical integration would fall under the editorial responsibility of the operators of the portal, ensuring the editorial coherence of material retrieved from divergent sources, and ongoing content maintenance would be further substantial expenses adding no real value to the current set-up.

It is therefore our view that the portal would add greater value to the current information landscape by linking the existing resources intelligently. This should go beyond the customary collection of non-explicit links, by tying these links into a clear content structure, explaining the remit of the individual resources, including a screenshot of the main search interface for clarification, and cross-referencing links to related resources. This contextualisation will require substantial editorial input and follow-up but is likely to add considerable value to the portal approach.

Existing databases however do not cover all information needs. There are also some basic tools which are not currently available at the European level, which it would still be necessary to develop. These include a wider partner database of those organisations who would like to participate in cultural co-operation projects, not linked to particular European funding streams, and mobility advice, which is not targeted purely to the performing arts. The production budget for the portal should therefore provide for the technical and editorial cost of producing an additional partners database and extra information on mobility issues to address any thematic areas that are not covered by existing online resources.

Regardless of the technical design, which should conform to current standards in terms of usability and accessibility, the added value of the portal would lie in its active, and interactive nature. Providing this kind of service would require substantial editorial input to keep the contents up to date and maintain a high turnover on the news and events services. Active web-mastering and community management would be further vital elements, enabling the portal to run relevant interactive features.

### 3) *Two Possible Scenarios*

In view of the considerations outlined above, it is our view that there are two main options for the development of a cultural co-operation portal: producing a new site or building on the existing European Culture Portal. In this section, we develop an indicative costing of the elements associated with these two scenarios:

Scenario A: Building on the current Commission culture portal, hosted on the Europa server  
Scenario B: Building a new portal without Commission branding and hosted externally

While the technical cost of migrating the current ECP site's pages into a new template should be similar for an updated template on the same site, or a new template on a different site, the real cost differences would be conditioned by the following considerations:

- ❑ the technical set-up of the pages (which could be static html, a combination of static and dynamic sections, or running under a content management approach)
- ❑ the possibilities and constraints deriving from the hosting arrangements

The current ECP site is composed of static html pages using cascading style sheets. Costings for the migration to a different template would depend upon the actual number of pages involved, and the method by which the pages were produced. For example, the cost would vary substantially depending on whether the pages were produced and maintained as static html, or via a database or content management system, set up to generate static html (which is done in some cases in order to work around hosting restrictions on dynamic features, as this is a faster, semi-automatic way of producing large volumes of html).

In order to sustain a large volume of updates cost-effectively, we would suggest that the new portal be built either using a combination of static and dynamic sections, or a content management system, in order to enable the editorial team to produce and update web pages directly via web-based maintenance interfaces. This approach would reduce the technical cost of html maintenance. The European Commission’s Internet Providers Guide (IPG) <<http://europa.eu.int/comm/ipg/>> states that although Europa does accept dynamic features, it will only sustain a limited range of softwares (which are not listed on the public site), under very specific conditions. The scope for hosting a dynamic or content managed site on Europa may therefore be limited. However, a dynamic set-up is strongly advisable in terms of maintenance costs, updating frequency and site coherence.

We will assume that the site includes four database-driven sections (“news”, “events”, “publications”, “partners database”) and a mailing list. Programming is assumed to be based on a Windows environment to ensure compatibility with Europa, either as the initial destination server, or in view of a repatriation of the site at a later stage. We are therefore not considering open source approaches at this stage.

Table 7 below provides indicative costings in order to provide a base for comparison, based on an average day rate of € 500. The costs in Table 7 relate purely to technical aspects for the production of one language version, and do not cover editorial issues such as content creation and content maintenance. This is discussed in brief below.

Table 7: Indicative costing elements for the production and maintenance of a portal on cultural co-operation

Item	Scenario A (On Europa) (Euro)	Scenario B (External Site) (Euro)	Comments
<b><i>Technical production</i></b>			
Definition of information architecture and site functionalities	2000	2000	
Graphic design: adaptation of templates building on the current design	2000	n.a.	Acquisition of photo rights or sourcing free material not included.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Scenario A (On Europa) (Euro)</b>	<b>Scenario B (External Site) (Euro)</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Graphic design: complete new look and feel (homepage and sample interior page, site map, up to ten page templates & including html formatting of templates)	n.a.	4500	Acquisition of photo rights or sourcing free material not included.
Editorial input (validation and creation of content, research, translation)			To be determined on the basis of the final specifications
Migration of existing content, integration of new content, data entry			To be determined on the basis of the final specifications
Analysis of functional requirements & specifications for the development of four new databases (news, agenda, publications, partners)	2500	2500	
Programming of four data-base driven sections, including the web-based input interfaces	From 15000	From 15000	Depending on level of complexity and programming options
Technical analysis of two existing databases	2000	2000	If integration of existing databases is required
Technical integration of Spanish cultural contact points database into new portal database	From 2500	From 2500	If integration of existing databases is required and subject to validation on the basis of information about the current technical set-up
Technical integration of on-the-move database	From 10000	From 10000	If integration of existing databases is required and subject to validation on the basis of information about the current technical set-up
Programming elements not related to partners database (search, forms, pre-selected database queries from other sections)	From 1650	From 1650	Depending on level of complexity and programming options
Coordination, quality control and reporting	15 % of total volume	15 % of total volume	
DNS arrangements	Covered by Europa	From 40 per DNS	
Hosting: Set-up	Covered by Europa	From 125	NB: Many agencies offer free hosting if it is part of a wider project and the site complies with the server specifications
<b><i>Technical maintenance</i></b>			
Hosting	Covered by Europa	From 250 per year for a database-driven site	Depending on softwares used, size of site and number and nature of interactive features. NB: Many agencies offer free hosting if it is part of a wider project and the site complies with the server specifications
Automatic, non-moderated interactive features (mailing lists, bulletin boards)	Covered by Europa	From 125 per year and feature, plus hourly rates for technical	Europa supports interactive features such as bulletin boards, mailing lists and chat facilities. Additional editorial

Item	Scenario A (On Europa) (Euro)	Scenario B (External Site) (Euro)	Comments
		support as required (e.g. administration of mailing lists)	input and monitoring will be required.
Technical webmastering, graphic and html maintenance, interaction management	67500	67500	Per year based on 2.5 days per week; although this would depend on the volume of updates
Server-related IT support (database administration, IT support for new or occasional interactive features)	Covered by Europa	13000	Per year based on 0.5 days per week.
IT support with regard to hosting	Covered by Europa	Usually part of general hosting fee	Troubleshooting hosting server is usually part of the hosting, unless fault is caused by client

### *Editorial concept and content, maintenance and promotion*

Annex D sets out further details on the potential content of a cultural co-operation portal including information on our assumptions in relation to editorial concept and content, maintenance and promotion. A small team of between one to three people would probably be required to run the site. Staff costs would vary according to the level of experience of the selected staff, the contractual arrangements and the social security costs prevailing in different countries.

However, if the staff is assumed to include one Category I staff member (15+ years professional experience) to oversee operations and two Category III staff members (5+ years professional experience) to gather information and perform day-to-day functions, this would cost in the region of Euro 130,000 per year .

### *Overall Running Cost*

Whether the portal were hosted on Europa or externally, the overall cost of running the is likely to be under **half million euros annually**. However, a final estimate could only be provided on the basis of a detailed specification and technical analysis.

### *4) Advantages and disadvantages of the two scenarios*

The cost comparison above shows that the additional costs associated with hosting a cultural co-operation portal externally, rather than on the Europa server, would lie principally in server-related IT support and hosting. These costs are likely to be in the range of € 13000 to € 26000 per year, although this figure could vary greatly depending on the complexity of the site, the software, the nature and number of interactive features, as well as the specifications and service level of the hosting service. If the portal were not hosted on Europa, there are also likely to be additional graphic design costs associated with developing new templates, rather than building on existing designs. Other expenses, such as the programming of new databases, the integration of external sites and maintenance are likely to be similar under both scenarios.

Given that the cost differential between the two scenarios identified is potentially quite small, it is clear that the advantages and disadvantages of the two options rest more with the usability and likely popularity of the different scenarios.

The advantages of Scenario A (building on the existing Europa-hosted portal) are clearly related to the potential to maximise and further develop what is already available. DG Education and Culture have pointed out that the European cultural portal is in a state of development, and it has always been intended that the portal should become more outward-focused and accessible as it grew. The Commission could envisage three separate stages of the site, which could be termed:

- *passive* – inward looking and containing mainly internal references;
- *externally focused* – including a series of links to other relevant websites;
- *proactive* - actively engaging with linked websites and ensuring some harmonization.

The presence of the cultural portal on the Europa site, with its clear association with the European institutions, may also give the portal a higher degree of credibility than a new, externally hosted site.

It is our assessment, the advantages of setting up a new, externally-hosted European cultural co-operation portal would seem to lie in two main factors:

- the visibility and accessibility of the service and;
- the sense of ‘ownership’ of the service among cultural players

While, as noted, the location of the current service within the Europa Server has certain advantages in terms of credibility, the sheer size of EU site and the range of subject areas covered can make it difficult to find the Cultural Portal pages and reduces the possibility to create a distinctive identity for the site. Furthermore, certain restrictions on the type of dynamic features that can be incorporated in sites hosted on Europa may restrict the options open to the Portal’s developers.

Moreover, a portal hosted on Europa is, by definition, strongly associated with the European institutions, something further accentuated by the emphasis within the current site on European policy and programmes. This has implications for cultural users who would like to increase cultural co-operation as part of a more ‘bottom up’ approach, on the basis of more spontaneous networking. If a new cultural portal were to be set up within the cultural field (either as part of an existing independent institution, or from scratch), it would have the advantage of being seen to be independent from the EU institutions, and ‘owned’ from within the sector. This sense of ownership could be increased by involving cultural organisations external to the EU institutions in the design and development of the portal.

The advantages and disadvantages of the two scenarios are highlighted in Table 8 below.

*Table 8: Advantages and disadvantages of the two scenarios*

	<b>Scenario A (build on existing portal)</b>	<b>Scenario B (new site, externally hosted)</b>
<b>Advantages</b>	Credibility (through association with EU institutions)	Visibility and distinctive identity, not directly associated with EU institutions
	Easier use of existing resources, exploiting work undertaken to date	Easier to develop “ownership” among cultural players and encourage “bottom-up” contributions to portal
<b>Disadvantages</b>	Less distinctive and potentially less visible resource	Probable extra cost
	Close association with Community institutions makes it more difficult to encourage “ownership” and “bottom-up” contributions	Potential duplication of work undertaken to date for existing cultural portal

Taking these issues into account, the study team would suggest that the small extra cost associated with the development of a new external cultural co-operation portal is justified due the likely increase in usability of the portal and the likely increased flexibility and interactivity of the site. The portal could perhaps be developed on the basis of a competition for a grant by organisations within the field. We point out, however, that this recommendation is made on the basis of the assumptions set out above and in Annex D of this report.

#### *7.4.3 Methods for increasing the availability of comparable data and statistics to support policy makers*

As noted earlier, the rationale for improving the availability of comparable harmonised data on the cultural sector, including on cultural co-operation, is clear. Indeed, the European Parliament’s Report on Cultural Co-operation in the European Union notes «a clear need to harmonise the language and key concepts relating to cultural policy so as to enable a European cultural information system to be set up”<sup>23</sup>, building on work already done in this field, notably by Eurostat.

The findings of the feasibility study confirm the need for a reinforcement of existing efforts in the area of cultural statistics, to enable an improved understanding of the sector. Although extensive work has been conducted in the area of cultural statistics at a European level, this

<sup>23</sup>Report on Cultural Co-operation in the European Union (2000/2323(INI)), European Parliament, 16 July 2001, p.15.

has served to demonstrate the complexity of the subject and the availability of comparable European statistics in the cultural field remains extremely limited.

*1) Activities in the field of cultural statistics to date.*

Following a Council resolution on the promotion of statistics on culture and economic growth in November 1995, the Commission established the Leadership Group (LEG) on cultural statistics in early 1997. The general aim of this group was to develop a system of coherent and comparable information to contribute to understanding of the link between culture and socio-economic development in the Member States.

The Leadership Group's work focused on four main areas:

1. Establishing a classification of cultural activities, as an observational working tool for common use in European countries, drawing on a framework already developed by UNESCO;
2. Drawing up a classification of cultural occupations;
3. Analysing cultural funding and expenditure, including the consumption of cultural goods and services and;
4. Defining variables and indicators to enable the description of supply and demand (including individual participation) in different cultural fields.

The key result of the three-year project was a series of detailed recommendations for improving data collection in these areas<sup>24</sup>. These included, among others, improving the design of the Community Labour Force Survey to take better account cultural occupations (defined by the LEG on the basis of NACE<sup>25</sup> classifications), further testing and development of a framework for reporting cultural expenditure and the synchronisation of national surveys on participation in cultural activities.

The recommendations of the LEG have not yet been translated into greatly improved data availability. Discussions with relevant Eurostat staff suggest that data on public expenditure on culture for the EU-15, EFTA/EEA countries, and the Acceding and Candidate countries should be available by the end of 2004, following the first survey in Autumn 2003. This will however depend on the quality and comparability of the results received from the national level. Figures for expenditure by private households for cultural goods and services have been gathered from the Household Budget Survey but because of the complexity of the topic and of methodological problems, further analysis is necessary before data can be published.

*2) Recommendations for the future*

Improved availability of comparable statistics on the cultural sector is an important factor in improving our understanding of the cultural sector in general and, as such, our understanding

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<sup>24</sup> See *Cultural Statistics in the EU: Final Report of the LEG 3/2000/E/No1*, Eurostat Working Paper 2000

<sup>25</sup> *Nomenclature statistique des Activités économiques dans la Communauté Européenne - Statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community*



of the nature and impact of cultural co-operation. In light of the limited progress made in this area to date, it is evident that an increased effort and resources are required, at both the European level and in the member states. Future efforts in this area should include a specific focus on developing ways to measure cultural co-operation activity and assess its impact. It is important to note however the current level of concern amongst some of those we consulted regarding the pressures for cultural organisations to provide data and statistics without extra resources to do this. This should be taken into account in developing any initiative to gather more data in the future.

It is recognized that a new initiative to gather comparative data, albeit one based on extensive work conducted to date, would be costly. Experience from indicator-gathering exercises for the EU-15, collecting established indicators has demonstrated the need for heavy human resource inputs. Based on rough estimations of what it would cost to define, collect, quality control and publish comparative data for 30 European countries, we would place the cost of such an exercise in the region of Euro 3 million per annum. A feasibility study would be necessary beforehand to establish more accurate estimates of such an exercise.

Despite this cost and although it is not in the scope of this study to make detailed recommendations about the development of indicators and collection of data in the field of cultural statistics, we would recommend that attention is paid to this field as a matter of urgency.